ENTERTAINMENT / G1

Big stars turn up for Inquirer's 21st anniversary party

BUSINESS / B1

Strong peso eases RP foreign debt by $2.7B

SPORTS / A24

Taekwondo's Go, billiards' Gabica settle for silver

WORLD / A28

Int'l Human Rights Day: Women worldwide protest rape in Darfur

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Monday, December 11, 2006 ★★ 9 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 3 P18 website: inquirer.net

Con-ass death shows people power alive

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO AVERTed a confrontation with a resurgent people power movement when she hastily called off on Saturday a determined final push by her congressional allies to ram through the constituent assembly (Con-ass) as a mechanism to shift to the parliamentary from the presidential system.

The President ordered her troops to abandon the drive as opposition to Con-ass rapidly gathered momentum across wide sectors in a flash-point reaction to the resolution passed by the House of Representatives on Wednesday, unilaterally convening the assembly without the Senate's participation.

The roughshod manner by which the

CON-ASS/ A6

Asean summit reset for Jan. 10-13

CEBU CITY—PHILIPPINE OFFICIALS YESTERDAY ANnounced the deferred Southeast Asian summit may be held Jan. 10-13 but reports persisted that its postponement was prompted by security fears rather than a typhoon that sideswiped the city and caused little damage.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front yesterday said local militants with ties to al-Qaida had plotted to disrupt the meeting of leaders of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations and their counterparts from China, Japan and South Korea.

"It was difficult to verify the threat, but we monitored it," MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu told the INQUIRER by telephone in Cotabato City. But Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, the regional police chief, said he had not confirmed any plot to disrupt the Cebu summit.

The four-day 12th Asean summit was originally

ASEAN SUMMIT/ A19

3 Filipino boxers share same pair of shorts, shirt

15TH ASIAN GAMES
DOHA 2006

PERO BRIEFS, KANYA-KANYA KAMI!

DOHA, QATAR—BELIEVE it or not: Three Filipino boxers had to share the same shirt and shorts in the 15th Asian Games.

Flyweight Violito Payla, featherweight Anthony Marcial and light welterweight Delfin Boholst were forced to wear the same fighting gear, leaving Philippine boxing coach Patricio Gaspi red-faced.

Gaspi said there were "some communication problems" between Philippine amateur boxing officials and those of the Philippine Sports Commission.

"I don't know what went wrong. Perhaps our boxing officials thought the contingent leader had enough playing (fighting) kits for the boxers," he said.

"But when we got here, we found there were no kits for three or four boxers. This forced Pay-

3 FILIPINO/ A10

INC warned GMA of public outrage

Concern over Con-ass relayed to JDV group

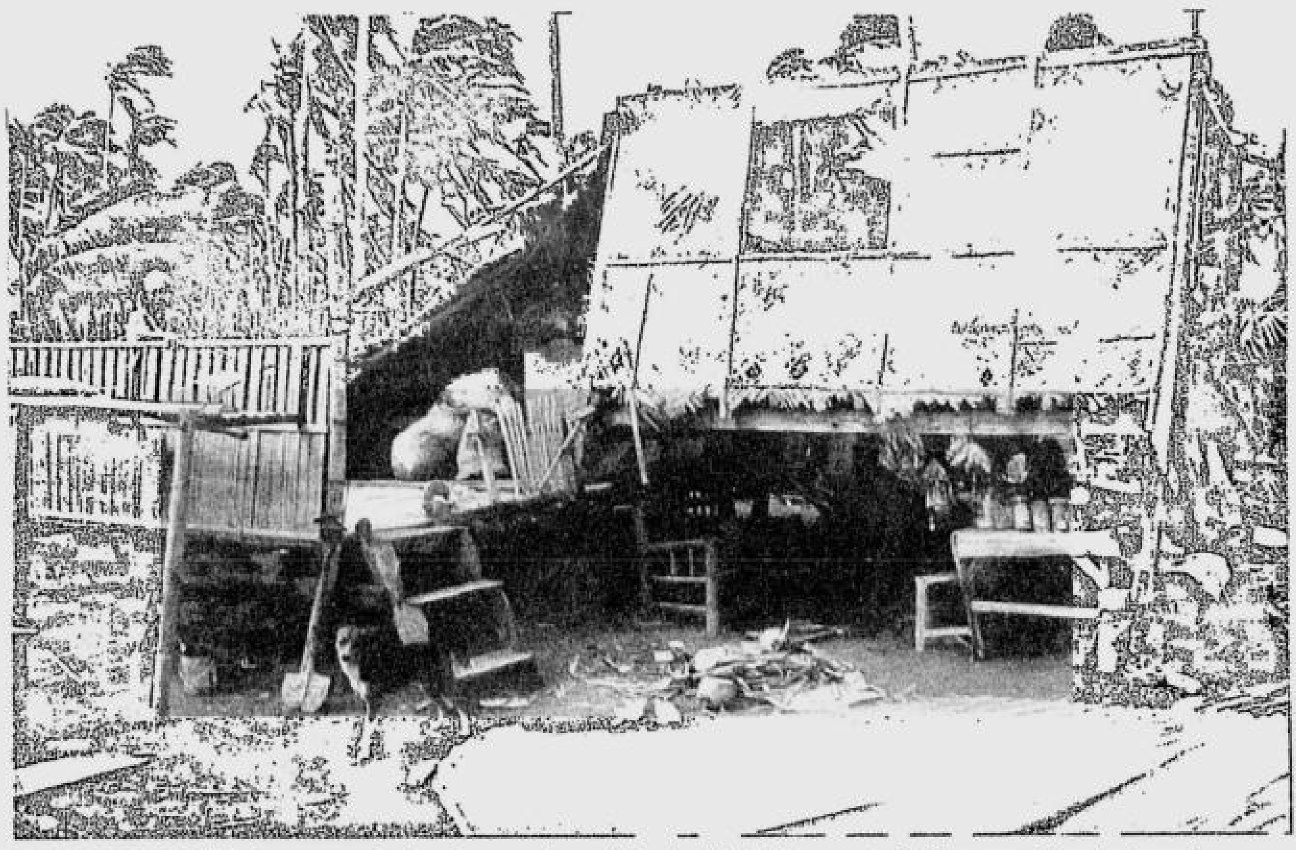
By Christine O. Avendaño

THE INFLUENTIAL IGLESIA ni Cristo (INC) has told President Macapagal-Arroyo of its concern over the country's political stability in the face of moves by her House allies to revise the Constitution even without Senate participation, the INQUIRER learned yesterday.

INC officials conveyed to Ms Arroyo their concerns over the House plan to call a constituent assembly (Con-ass) during a meeting on Friday night—or on the eve of Speaker Jose de Venecia's surprise announcement that the House leaders were now giving the Senate a chance to join them in amending the Constitution by pursuing the other option of a constitutional convention (Con-con), according to a reliable source, who knew about the meeting.

"They (INC leaders) told the President they were concerned about her and the situation in the country and the stability of the country (because) of the outrage caused (by Con-ass)," said the source, who did not

INC WARNED/ A18



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

DOUBLE DISASTER. Over a week after Supertyphoon "Reming" left 90 percent of all houses either destroyed or damaged in Marinduque, including this hut, Typhoon "Seniang" battered the island-province again yesterday.

'Seniang' leaves 5 dead in Visayas

By Inquirer Visayas, Inquirer Southern Luzon and Blanche S. Rivera

TYPHOON "SENIANG" (INTERNAtional code name: Utor) left five people dead in the Visayas as it pounded Panay Island yesterday, downing power lines that left Capiz, Aklan (including the resort island of Boracay), Samar, Leyte, Biliran and Bantayan Island without electricity.

A power barge—a floating generator supplying electricity to Romblon—spilled some of its fuel into the sea, the civil defense office said.

Seniang's path was just south of Bicol, where more than 1,000 people were killed or missing after Supertyphoon "Reming" struck on Nov. 30.

Unlike on Nov. 30 when Reming hit the country, classes were not suspended in Metro Manila today.

"Based on Pagasa advice, there will be regular classes [today] except in areas earlier announced as severely affected by Typhoon Reming. (Classes in these areas) will remain suspended until Jan. 7," Education Secretary Jesli Lapus said.

The advisory of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astron-

'SENIANG'/ A17

Bury Con-ass bid, allies urge De Venecia

By Michael Lim Ubac and TJ Burgonio

IT IS TIME TO ENTOMB CON-ASS.

This, in effect, was the message that some of Speaker Jose de Venecia's allies in the House of Representatives intended to convey to him at a planned majority caucus today.

House Assistant Majority Leader Abraham Kahlil "Baham" Mitra said De Venecia called the caucus for 2 p.m. so that the House majority could plan their course of action following the Speaker's announcement on Saturday that the House was ready to call a constitutional convention (Con-con) to overhaul the Constitution.

"We will try to convince the Speaker that we can't do the Cha-cha without the Senate," the Palawan lawmaker told the INQUIRER.

Mitra was referring to a House resolution approved over opposition objections that called on the Senate to join the House in a constituent assembly (Con-ass) to revise the Charter.

"I feel that the House should now bury Con-ass and give life to the pending Con-con bills," he said.

Mitra said that setting aside Con-ass was the logical step in the face of growing public outrage over the haste by which the Charter

BURY CON-ASS/ A18

Pagcor beats CBCP to venue of Dec. 15 rally

By Christian V. Esguerra, *in Manila* and Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF the Philippines is not abandoning the nationwide prayer rally it set against the constituent assembly that the House of Representatives is pushing to overhaul the Constitution, but a government gambling agency appeared to have beaten the CBCP to the venue in Manila.

Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) had reserved and paid for the use of the Quirino Grandstand at Rizal Park before the bishops announced that they had scheduled the prayer rally for Dec. 15, Msgr. Pedro

PAGCOR BEATS/ A10

New 'old town' of heritage houses fuels furor

AN "OLD town" of ancestral houses, including the Reyes House (inset), rises in a seaside village in Bagac, Bataan.
PHOTOS BY TONETTE OREJAS/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

SPECIAL REPORT

(First of two parts)

PORAC, PAMPANGA—SITTING on a bamboo bench by the roadside, 86-year-old Felicidad Lising let out an expression of outrage her neighbors in the village of Pio here do not usually hear from the mild-mannered grandmother.

"*Ay Dios ko! E ustu ita* (Oh my God! That's a wrong thing to do)," Lising said, casting her droopy eyes on the village's 145-year-old Catholic chapel.

It has unsettled her, she said, that the chapel has been bought and destined for transfer to Bagac, Bataan.

Such stories have not died down since October, according to Josefina Rubi, chair of the Parish Pastoral Council at Pio.

The menfolk have vowed to protect the chapel from antique dealers and the demolition crew they have been expecting to descend on their community.

The residents are not imagining their fears and they have reason to be vigilant. The controversy actually leads straight to a private venture that is unrivaled in scale in the country.

Some 60 kilometers southwest of Pio, New San Jose Builders Inc. president Jerry Acuzar is creating an "old town" on his 50-hectare seaside property in Barangay Pag-asa in Bagac.

Nine centuries-old houses

NEW 'OLD TOWN'/ A18

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Occidental Mindoro and the Calamian Group of islands will have stormy weather. The rest of Mindoro and Lubang island will experience rains and gusty winds while Western Visayas and the rest of Luzon will be cloudy with rains. The rest of the country will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/12/10/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Cha-cha may delay budget measure

By TJ Burgonio

SENATE LEADERS YESTERDAY WARNED THAT the passage of the proposed P1.126 trillion budget for 2007 before the end of the year might be sidetracked by the House of Representatives' preoccupation with Charter change.

The House, which devoted last week's sessions entirely to amending its rules and passing a resolution convening Congress into a constituent assembly, has yet to form a panel for the bicameral conference committee, dimming the early passage of the General Appropriations Act.

"If the bicam isn't convened this week, the passage of the budget will be delayed," Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. said in an interview.

Sen. Franklin Drilon, chair of the Senate panel, said he was apprehensive that unless both panels met this week and threshed out some of the major differences in their versions of the money measures, the passage of the budget could be sidetracked.

"If nothing substantial comes up this week, the budget will be run over by the House Cha-cha train," Drilon said in an interview.

The bicameral conference committee has less than two weeks to tackle the budget before Congress adjourns for the holidays on Dec. 22. It resumes sessions on Jan. 23.

Drilon, chair of the Senate committee on finance, said he wanted the bicameral conference to start as early as tomorrow, but his House counterpart, Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, wasn't sure if he could constitute a panel by that time.

"He said he'll try. The problem is we haven't met once," Drilon said.

The members of the Senate panel are Senate Pro Tempore Juan Flavier, and Senators Joker Arroyo, Rodolfo Biazon, Ralph Recto, Jinggoy Estrada, Panfilo Lacson, Jamby Madrigal and Edgardo Angara.

Both panels have to bridge huge gaps in their respective versions of the proposed 2007 budget.

The Senate version, which was passed on final reading on Dec. 4, was lower by some P8.4 billion than the outlay approved by the House last month. Because of this, the senators expect a tough bicameral conference with the congressmen.

Meanwhile, Drilon said that the Senate did not allocate any funds for the conduct of a plebiscite on Charter change amendments in the Commission on Elections' P9.167 billion budget for next year.

"Why should we fund an electoral exercise which in the view of the Senate finance committee is patently unlawful and contrary to the Constitution?" Drilon said in a statement.

DOJ to show US has jurisdiction over Smith in Makati hearing

By Leila B. Salaverria and Tarra V. Quismundo

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE will present today before a Makati court the "clear" provision in the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement which allows the United States to take custody of convicted rapist Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said his department would oppose the contention of rape victim "Nicole" and her private lawyer, Evalyn Ursua, that Smith should remain in the custody of Philippine authorities.

Smith, 21, was one of four Marines accused in the rape of "Nicole" at the Subic Bay Freeport on Nov. 1, 2005, and the only one meted out a guilty verdict.

"We will take a stand against them. We will follow the VFA. We are not lawless," Gonzalez said in a phone interview when asked about Nicole's contrary position on Smith's detention.

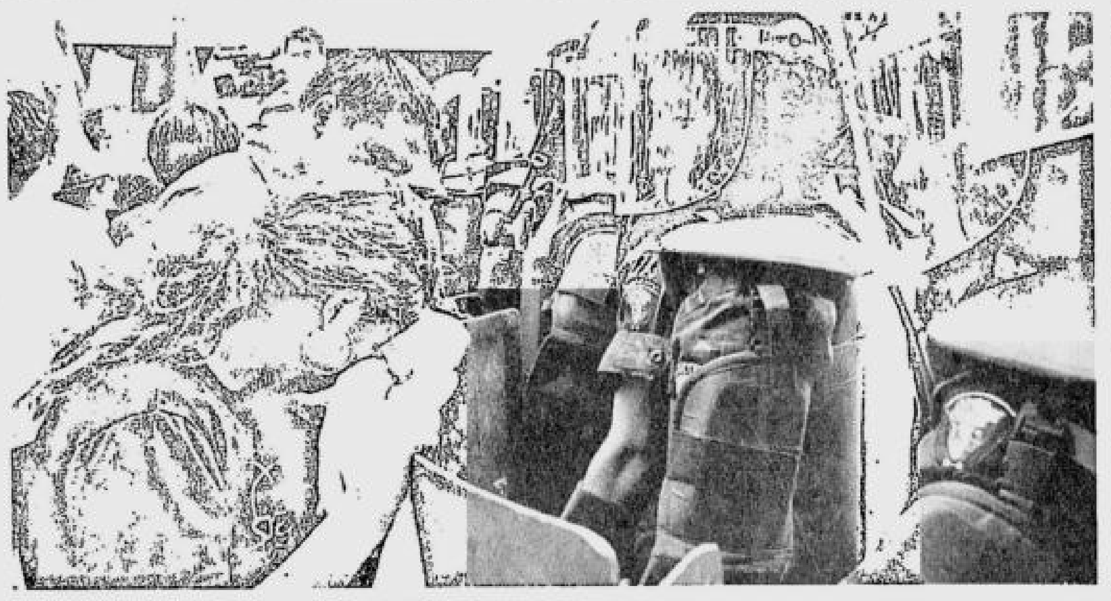
Smith's legal team and Nicole's private counsel are due in court this afternoon to exchange arguments on the convicted Marine's custody, an issue that the Philippine and US governments had agreed on but which was challenged by the private complainant.

Judge Benjamin Pozon of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 139 is expected to listen to both sides in a hearing he set on Smith's urgent appeal on his incarceration at the Makati city jail, which is being questioned by his legal team, the US Embassy and the Philippine government for being in alleged breach of the VFA.

Gonzalez said an international treaty did not always supersede national laws, although he warned that not honoring the VFA could make other countries lose trust in the Philippines.

He also said he had no problem with Smith being detained at the US Embassy, which is technically American soil.

"He could even be detained in Judge Pozon's house if the Judge wants," Gonzalez said.



PROTESTING IS HARD WORK

Even protesters get the blues as a tired demonstrator rests her weary head on the shield of a riot policeman assigned to protect the Malacañang Palace in the South, after the Asean Summit was postponed due to stormy weather. Militant groups still marched around Cebu City, however, to mark International Human Rights Day yesterday. ***(See related photo on Page A3)*** AP

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Men in uniform nab anti-Charter change youth in QC

By Alcuin Papa and DJ Yap

NINE MEMBERS OF MILITANT youth organizations campaigning against proposals to amend the Constitution were arrested and held briefly by armed men in military uniforms in Quezon City yesterday afternoon.

Dion Cerrafon, Student Christian Movement chair, identified some of the militants as Dino Perez, Frances Martinez, Jonard Nabus, and persons identified only as Joey, Kris and Jay.

Vencer Crisostomo, national chair of the League of Filipino Students, said the youth leaders from SCM, Anakbayan, Kabataan Party and LFS were holding a mobile propaganda drive aboard a jeepney near a market in Lupang Pangako near Payatas, Quezon City, against Charter change and the reported deployment of soldiers in the area.

At around 4:30 p.m., 20 soldiers in full battle gear blocked the activists and accosted them.

Cerrafon identified one of the military officers as 1st Lt. Ron Corsillas.

"They were wearing AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) uniforms, and they were carrying long firearms, including M-16s," he said, but was uncertain to which military unit the armed men belonged.

Crisostomo said they were taken to the barangay hall of Lupang Pangako and released two hours later. "They were interrogated first. Then they were filmed through a video camera against their will. Basically, they were harassed," he said.

Cerrafon said the men accused the militants of being members of the communist New People's Army and began interrogating them about their organizations and activities.

"They were asking where they lived, who they were, what groups they belonged to. It was harassment," Cerrafon said.

He said the militants did not report the incident to the police out of fear that the latter were in cahoots with the military men, but added that they would still discuss their legal options.

"Harassment and threats of violence will not stop us from protesting against the bogus Con-ass. These moves will only infuriate more youth and students, and will encourage greater youth participation in the anti-Cha-cha protests," Crisostomo said.

He also said the military had deployed squads of soldiers in Payatas who go from house to house looking for members of militant groups "in preparation for the elections."

Officials in the Lupang Pangako hall could not immediately be reached for comment, but a barangay security development officer in Payatas B confirmed the presence of an Army detachment in the area.

"They arrived about two weeks ago," said BSDO deputy Melchor Domasian. "They said they would conduct surveys. They were concerned about the peace and order situation," he added.

Domasian said that soldiers had also been deployed in Barangays Commonwealth and Batasan Hills.

Cerrafon said his group had monitored the military presence even in Pandacan and Sta. Mesa in Manila.

He said he believed the deployment of military men in heavily populated places in Metro Manila was meant to foil attempts to mobilize groups against Cha-cha.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro, spokesperson of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). He did not answer his cell phone.

Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula, director of the Quezon City Police District, said the police had yet to receive any reports on the abduction.

Bunye: I didn't force Cruz out

PRESS SECRETARY IGNACIO Bunye denied yesterday a report published in the INQUIRER that he was part of a "clique" in the Cabinet that was behind the resignation of Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz.

Bunye said that, on the contrary, he had regarded Cruz's departure from the Cabinet as a "great loss not only to the Cabinet but also to the country which needs principled leaders like him."

"Further, while I remain a member of Lakas, no one can accuse me of making decisions strongly along party lines," Bunye said in his "View from the Palace" column. *Christine O. Avendaño*

NoKor nuke talks, JPEPA on dinner menu at Palace

JAPAN WANTS "EARLY AND CONCRETE RESULTS" from any resumption of six-party talks on ending North Korea's nuclear program, visiting Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said in Manila on Sunday.

Abe and President Macapagal-Arroyo also called for the early resumption of the talks on North Korea even as they condemned recent missile launches and nuclear tests by that country.

In remarks after a dinner late Saturday, Abe, who was on an official visit to the Philippines, said in Japanese that "if the six-party talks are resumed, we want early and concrete results."

Abe said that even in the early stages of the talks, "there should be results already because there will already have been consultations before that." He also said that if the talks were resumed, Japan would bring up the issue of the Japanese citizens who were abducted and were still being held in North Korea.

"The abduction issue is a priority issue of my administration. I will continue to ask the North Koreans to hand over and secure safely the Japanese they abducted."

A US newspaper reported that the talks would resume in Beijing on Saturday but this had not been confirmed.

The six-party talks involving China, the two Koreas, the United States, Japan and Russia began in 2003 but had been stalled for the past year over North Korean objections to US financial sanctions.

In a joint statement, Ms Arroyo and Abe "expressed their grave concern about the recent developments on the Korean peninsula."

"They condemned the recent missile launches and nuclear tests conducted by North Korea and urged North Korea to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs," the joint Philippine-Japanese statement said.

The two leaders also "urged North Korea to respond to other security and humanitarian concerns of the international community including the abduction issue."

Abe arrived in Manila on Friday for an official visit and left early Sunday. He was originally scheduled to attend a summit of Southeast Asian leaders in Cebu but it was postponed due to an approaching typhoon.

In his talks with Ms Arroyo, Abe also assured the President that the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) would not result in Tokyo dumping its toxic wastes in the Philippines.

With the assurance, Malacañang now expects a swift Senate ratification of the trade pact.

"The assurance made by Prime Minister Abe should dispel once and for all the unfounded allegations and speculations about the JPEPA and we expect that this will result to the speedy ratification by the Senate," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

President Arroyo had already endorsed the JPEPA to the Senate for its ratification.

In his "View from the Palace" column, Bunye said that the Arroyo administration was standing behind the JPEPA as "an instrument for Philippine prosperity and stability and as a monument to our mutually beneficial relationship with Japan."

Japan remains the Philippines' biggest foreign funding donor, committing an estimated $1.3 billion in new investments, grants and loans to the country including assistance to the country's weather bureau. *AFP with reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Nikko Dizon*

UNDRESSED TO PROTEST
Dressed to look like President Macapagal-Arroyo (left), a protester "whips" a gagged human rights "victim" to mark International Human Rights Day in Cebu City yesterday. The protesters went ahead with their rally despite the postponement of the Asean summit. *(See related photo on Page A2)* AP

Airport bomber escapes

COTABATO CITY—Three heavily armed men broke into the provincial prison in this southern city and liberated an inmate who had been imprisoned for the bombing of the city airport, police said.

One jail guard was wounded in the gun battle when the three men, dressed like soldiers and carrying assault rifles, swooped down on the prison, freeing Badrudin Dalungan, a suspected Muslim extremist who was being held for the 2003 bombing of the Cotabato airport.

The bombing had razed much of the airport terminal but killed no one.

It was one of the series of bombings that had wracked the southern Philippines at the time and which were seen as attempts to divert the government's attention away from its offensive against guerrillas of the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Dalungan and the men who freed him were believed to be members of a special MILF urban operations squad, according to Cotabato city police chief, Supt. Peraco Macacuja. *AFP*

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More judges now feel their pay adequate, nationwide poll shows

THERE ARE MORE judges in the Philippines who regard their salaries as "adequate" compared to, say, 10 years ago.

However, according to the latest national survey, 17 percent of the judges believe Regional Trial Court justices are corrupt, 14 percent feel that their colleagues in the Metropolitan Trial Court judges take bribes, and 12 percent think that judges in the Court of Appeals are on the take.

These are some of the findings in the Social Weather Stations 2005-2006 "Diagnostic Study of the Judiciary." The study was sponsored by the Asia Foundation with support from the United States Agency for International Development and was conducted with the close cooperation of the Supreme Court.

Enough earnings

Self-administered questionnaires were mailed to 1,512 judges from regional trial courts, metropolitan trial courts, municipal trial courts, municipal circuit trial courts and Shari'ah courts nationwide between October 2005 and February 2006. They elicited 1,072 responses, translating to a 71-percent response rate—up from the 61-percent response rate in a previous 2003-2004 study.

The SWS study found that the number of judges who regarded their pay as "adequate" rose from 17 percent in a study in 1995-1996, to 22 percent in 2003-2004, to 36 percent in 2005-2006. In the most recent survey, only 61 percent called their compensation "inadequate," compared to 81 percent a decade ago.

And while there was no increase in the percentage of judges who agreed that the Rules of Court encouraged corruption (from 11 percent in 2003-2004 to 10 percent in 2005-2006), those who disagreed with this statement decreased from 81 percent in 2003-2004 to 64 percent in 2005-2006, due to an increase in the undecided vote from 7 percent two years ago to 24 percent this year.

Corrupt

Judges who said there were "many/very many" corrupt judges or justices were broken up into the following proportions: 17 percent felt there was corruption among RTC judges, 14 percent believed this of MTC judges, 12 percent of Court of Appeals judges, 4 percent of Shari'a Court judges, 4 percent of Sandiganbayan justices and 3 percent of Supreme Court justices.

Trial system OK

For the first time, a larger percentage of judges agreed that the continuous trial system was working (43 percent), compared to the 35 percent who disagreed. This was not the case 10 years ago, when 58 percent disagreed with this statement, and only 35 percent agreed.

The continuous trial system was envisioned as a mode of judicial fact-finding conducted with speed and dispatch so that trials are held on the scheduled dates without needless postponement. In the system, factual issues for trial are defined beforehand and the proceedings are set to be terminated and ready for judgment within 90 days from the date of initial hearing, except for "meritorious reasons" which allow for extensions.

Problems

The top reasons cited by judges for the continuous trial system was problematic included: Unavailability of prosecutors (58 percent), unavailability of lawyers and litigants (52 percent), and unavailability of lawyers from the Public Attorney's Office (50 percent).

The study also found that health and hospitalization insurance, as well as improved retirement benefits, were the fringe benefits the judges said they would most appreciate, as 9 out of 10 called them "very important."

Insurance needed

Over 8 of 10 judges said they needed adequate life/disability insurance (85 percent), while only 1 in 10 actually had insurance (11 percent). Meanwhile, 64 percent said they needed to have a licensed gun to protect themselves, while only 16 percent actually had a gun.

When asked about the consistency of court decisions, 81 percent agreed that the Supreme Court's decision followed precedents and 72 percent said decisions by the Court of Appeals were consistent.

Consistency

"The study detected a relation between the judges' appraisal of consistency in the decisions of various courts and their perception of corruption in those courts: The higher their rating of consistency in decisions of a particular court level, the smaller the estimate of the number of corrupt judges in that court level," the SWS said in a statement.

Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research

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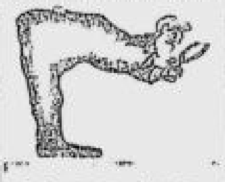
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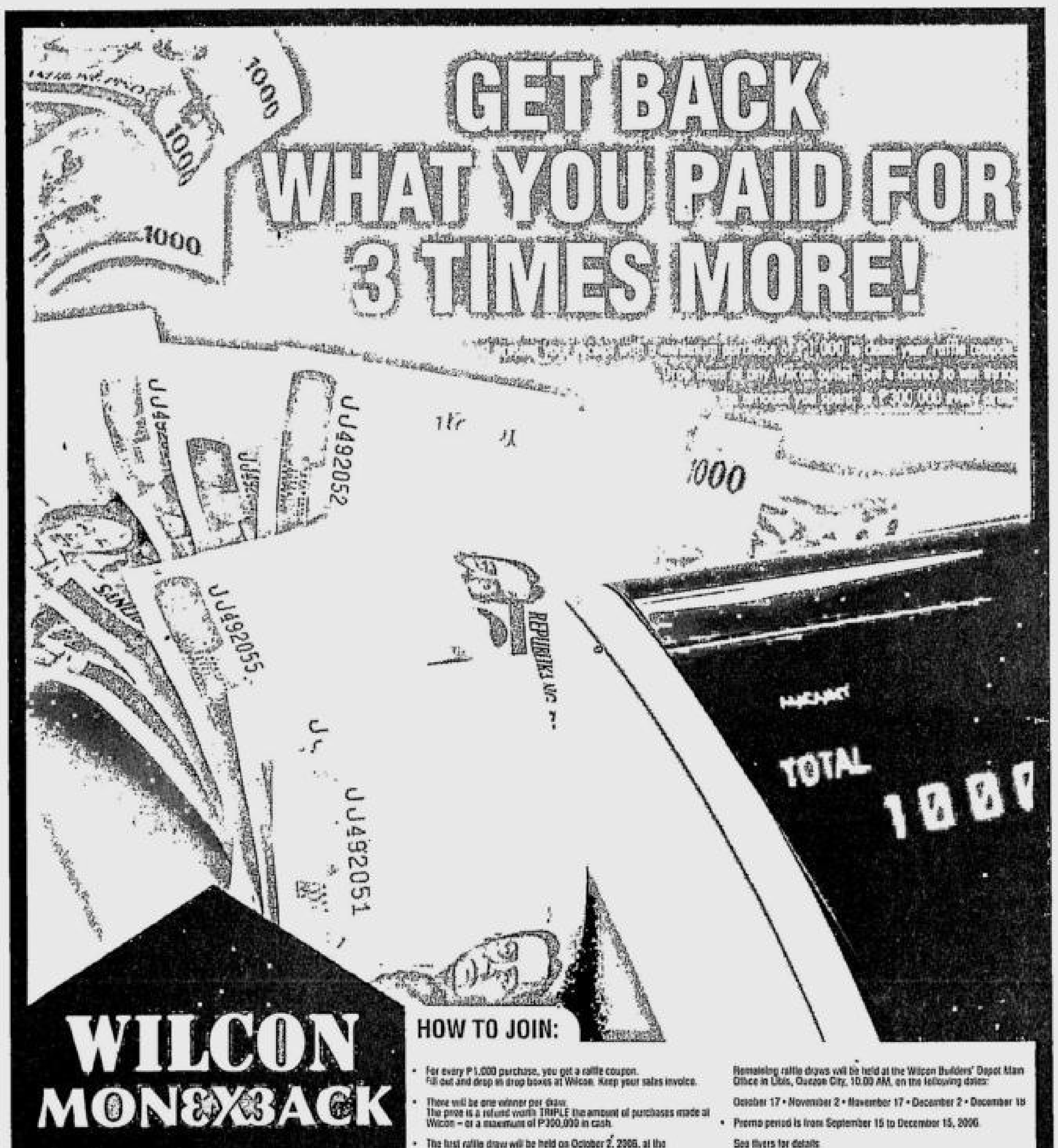
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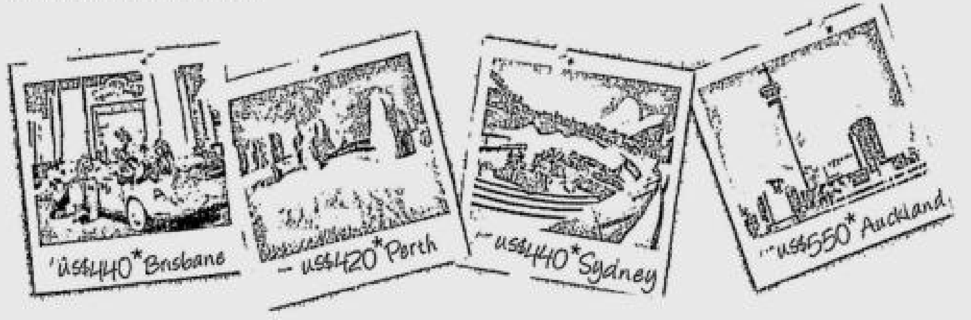

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ROYAL BRUNEI

Legazpi survivors report hearing voices under mud

By Joanna Los Baños
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—SINCE SUPER-typhoon "Reming" battered this city on Nov. 30, residents of Barangay Padang here have said they have been "hearing voices" from the site where hundreds of people were buried alive by mudflows.

Erlinda Brul, 46, a resident of Barangay Padang, whose house was only a few meters away from where the mudflows hit, said she and her neighbors had been hearing people wailing and babies crying.

"We have been very scared since," she said.

As much as possible, residents try to avoid the area.

She said the village, where more than 50 people died and almost 200 were still missing, smelled heavily of rotting corpses.

"I'm scared to walk alone there. I might step on dead people," she said.

Neighbor's story

Brul related a story that supposedly happened to a neighbor who was taking a bath early one morning.

"He ran toward us when he heard a baby crying. But when he turned to look back in the direction the cry seemed to be coming from, he discovered he was alone," she said.

Brul said the voices they were hearing were probably those of people who were buried alive.

"Maybe they are asking for help and prayers," she said.

If she had a choice, Brul said she would move her family to a safer place.

"I'm really scared of what might happen to us here," she said.

"During the storm, we did not know that something bad was happening to our neighbors. The wind and rain were so strong. We heard rocks falling but we did not think it was that near," she said.

Miraculously saved

"I am really thankful that nothing happened to me and my family," she said in near tears.

Brul's house was miraculously saved while mudflows swallowed the houses to its left and right.

"It was as if the mudflow split and we were saved," she said.

On Saturday, Brul's family, other villagers of Padang and Albay evacuated to safer ground as typhoon Seniang was expected to bring a heavy volume of rainfall that could trigger flash floods and mudslides down Mayon volcano.

Barangay Padang, which is located less than 10 km from Mayon volcano, has at least 2,500 residents, according to its village chieftain.

Go green and help Mother Earth this holiday—Greenpeace

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LUCENA CITY—WITH the coming holiday, international environmentalist group Greenpeace has urged the public to opt for a "green" Christmas to help protect fragile Mother Earth.

In its Internet website (www.greenpeace.org), Greenpeace asked gift-givers to avoid overly packaged products and those made with toxic polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastic or out of endangered trees.

Greenpeace said PVC was one of the most toxic and environmentally damaging of all plastics. Commonly known as "vinyl," it is used in packaging and children's toys, among other products.

Greenpeace also warned the public against giving electronic items as holiday present.

"Check out which companies are doing more than others to make cleaner products. This year's presents shouldn't be next year's toxic waste," the group said.

Reports say the world consumes more electronic products every year, causing a rise in electronic scrap (e-waste) from old computers and mobile phones that contain toxic and heavy metals which cannot be disposed of or recycled safely.

Greenpeace advised the public to cut down on their shopping, and not only to save money.

"As a general rule, the more you buy and consume the more of the planet's limited resources you are using up. Try to buy local produce to cut the travel miles your holiday essentials have clocked up," the group said.

But if one is an inveterate shopper, at least be travel smart, Greenpeace said.

"To go shopping or visit relatives, take public transportation or carpool. Shop online. You can get your loved ones gift memberships to environmental organizations, like Greenpeace," the group said.

Instead of glossy gift wrappers, Greenpeace suggested using wrappers made of recycled paper. Last year's Christmas cards could be turned into recycled gift tags, the group said.

For the traditional Christmas tree, Greenpeace suggested using a "living" tree that could be used again year after year. Adorn it with fewer Christmas lights, too, to save on energy, the environmental group said.

And "don't forget to turn off the lights before you go to bed or leave your house. Use LED (light-emitting diode) bulbs to save on energy," Greenpeace said. LED produces more light per watt than incandescent bulbs.

Greenpeace also recommended giving compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs as Christmas gifts. They are available in all shapes, sizes and colors and save more energy and last longer than the old fashioned bulbs.

"A 100-percent compact florescent household makes a great New Year's resolution and a good investment in energy (and money) savings," Greenpeace said.

Dr. A. S. Sta. Ana, hospitals chief; 86

DR. AUGUSTO S. STA. ANA, CHIEF OF Eastern Bicol Medical Center (formerly Catanduanes Provincial Hospital) in 1958-1972 and of Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo Memorial Hospital (formerly Andres Bonifacio Memorial Hospital) in 1972-1986 died yesterday. He was 86.

He is survived by his children Filomeno and Benita and their respective spouses, Nenita, and Eddie Ponio; six grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

His remains lie at the Garden Chapels at Arlington on C. Raymundo Street, Pasig City. Interment will be Dec. 12 at 1 p.m. at the Pasig Catholic Cemetery.

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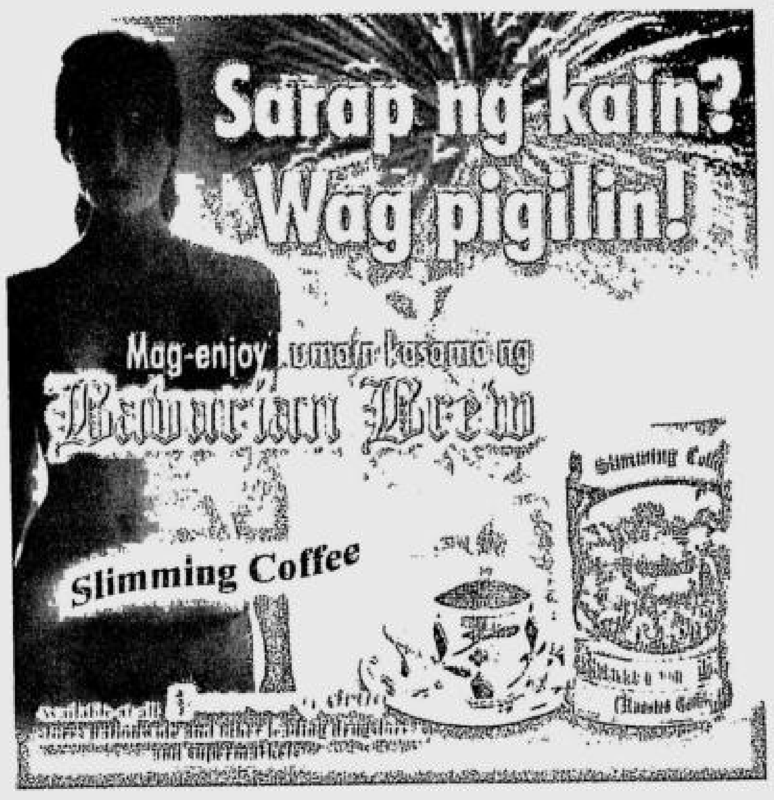

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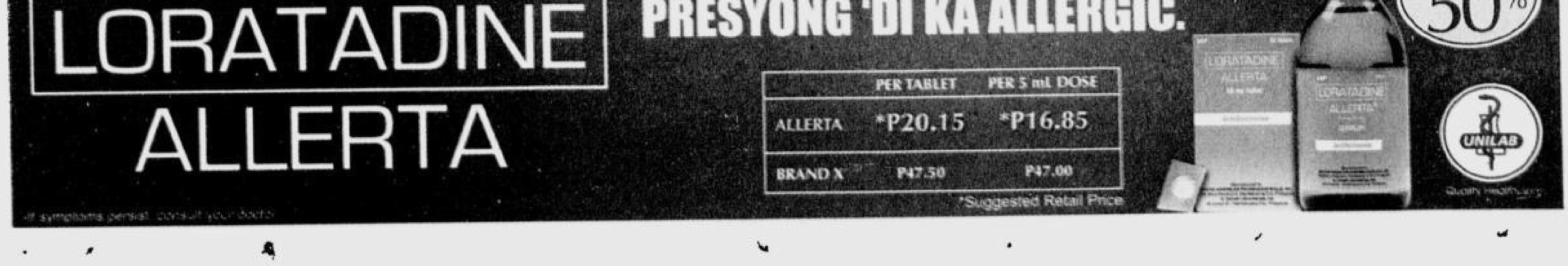

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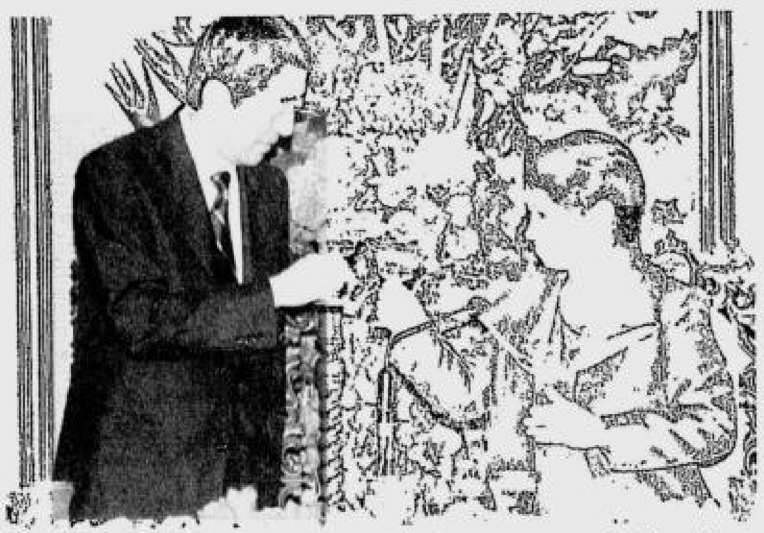

JAPANESE Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shares a toasts with President Macapagal-Arroyo during a state dinner at Malacañang. (*See story on Page A3.*) REUTERS

Con-ass death shows people power alive

From page A1

President's allies in the House passed the resolution sparked a political storm that galvanized the strongest outrage against the administration since the crisis of July 2005, when her administration was on the verge of collapse under pressure from street protests demanding her resignation over tapes tending to show presidential interference in the canvassing of the 2004 election results.

The scuttling of the Con-ass campaign not only left the administration's constitutional change juggernaut in disarray but inflicted disastrous collateral damage to Philippine foreign policy prestige since it followed the sudden postponement on Friday of the summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, scheduled to have started in Mactan today, due to the administration's concerns over the threatening street disturbances over the House resolution.

The postponement was unprecedented in Asean's history. Since the founding of Asean in Bangkok 39 years ago, this was the first time an Asean host country had postponed an Asean summit for reasons of either bad weather, domestic political turbulence or security issues.

The postponement not only left the Mactan summit preparations in a shambles but also highlighted political instability in the Philippines and the insecurity of its government to maintain political control.

The official reason for the postponement was that a storm heading toward Central Visayas threatened disruption of the summit. The real reason is that the administration was facing a huge international embarrassment hosting a major regional conference in the midst of a smoldering political turmoil stemming from the House resolution on Con-ass.

The last time a major international conference was postponed was in June 1965, when the second Afro-Asian Bandung conference in Algiers collapsed following the coup d'etat on the Algerian regime of President Ahmed Ben Bella by his defense minister, Col. Hoarie Boumedienne.

Fatal consequences

Summit conferences are hardly postponed without fatal consequences to the hosts. The Algiers summit collapse marked a historic setback for the Bandung Afro-Asian movement and changed the alignment of the emerging postcolonial states of Asia and Africa.

With the Con-ass campaign in ruins and the Asean summit momentum shattered, there is now doubt whether the summit can be reassembled next year even if the administration's turnaround seems to have dissipated the political tempest caused by the House resolution.

The postponement heightened international and regional concerns over fresh threats to the regime's stability stemming from the political turbulence sparked by the administration's "final push" to ram through the convening of Con-ass.

The way the administration's allies in the House pushed roughshod the resolution with the sheer force of their parliamentary majority provoked the revival of the dormant people power movement.

The resolution forced the Senate, facing extinction from the shift to a single-chamber legislature being pushed by the administration's allies, to close ranks to oppose the project. For the first time, since July 2005, at the height of the crisis of the Arroyo presidency, the streets had come alive again, seething with renewed turbulence.

Turmoil stole Mactan show

The Catholic bishops had issued a call to their constituency to join mass protest actions in "prayer rallies" on Dec. 15 in solidarity with leftist militants and civil society antigovernment activists.

The political turmoil that followed the House resolution delegations stole the show from the Mactan coming-of-age celebration as an exhibit of the administration's regional growth platforms envisaged in the last State of the Nation Address of the President.

There is little indication that although the administration's retreat has removed a major threat of political unrest, its withdrawal has sealed the fate of the administration's constitutional reform project as a key policy objective.

The outrage over Con-ass signals a powerful public backlash against any attempt to change it at this time, even if the administration switches to the track of a constitutional convention.

The outrage over Con-ass indicates that the people power movement is far from dead. The House resolution brought it back to life. It waited for an issue to reawaken it. Con-ass did it.

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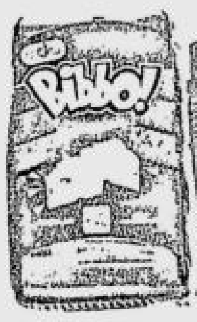

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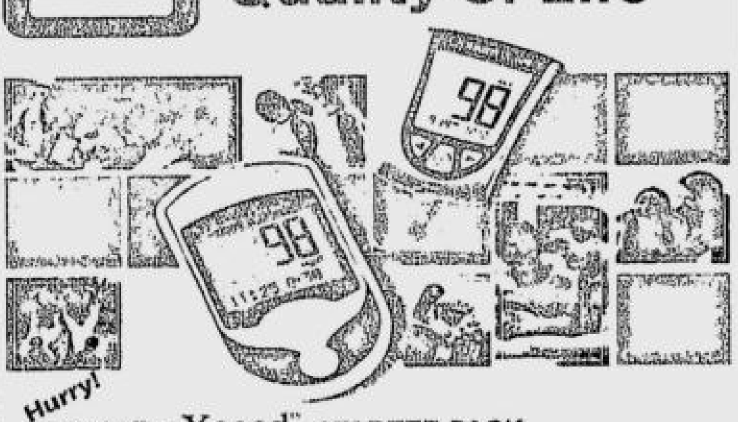

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Bureau calls on higher authority to hike tax take

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE BUREAU OF Internal Revenue has partnered with a Christian group to disseminate tax information in the BIR's bid to meet its collection target of P675.353 billion in the last three weeks remaining in 2006.

Revenue Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag said the BIR and the Fellowship of Christians in Government Inc. (FOCIG) had signed a memorandum of agreement to promote awareness among taxpayers about the need to pay the correct taxes on time.

Buñag said the Quezon City BIR regional office, headed by Director Merlinda Ordoyo and Assistant Director Marina de Guzman, had conducted tax seminars on the Improved Voluntary Assessment Program (IVAP) and the Abatement Program among taxpayers in the revenue district offices.

Right taxes

The seminars were conducted with the cooperation of FOCIG members who invited big and small taxpayers to the seminars on the various BIR tax regulations that give incentives to taxpayers who pay the right taxes on time.

Revenue District Officers Clavelina Nacar of South Quezon City, Romeo Naranjo of Cubao and Jonas Amora of Marikina City also conducted separate symposia in response to Buñag's directive to intensify the tax collection campaign.

Under the MOA, FOCIG volunteered to partner with the BIR in implementing the tax compliance verification drive.

FOCIG will assist the BIR in informing taxpayers about their obligations, especially in the matter of registration, invoice and bookkeeping requirements through door-to-door campaigns and orientation seminars and providing the BIR with tax campaign materials.

Leaves canceled

Buñag had earlier issued a memo to all the bureau's collection officials, particularly in its Large Taxpayers Service, as well as all revenue regional directors and district offices, canceling all vacation leaves for the month of December in order to enable the BIR to focus on its tax collection campaign.

Buñag said the tax seminars held on different dates in south Quezon City, Cubao and Marikina were well-attended, indicating increasing taxpayer interest in paying their taxes.

With the IVAP, taxpayers are given the opportunity to avail themselves of the privilege of last priority in audit, which enables the government to maximize revenue collection with the least administrative cost.

The program, which ends Dec. 29, seeks to maintain a harmonious relationship between the BIR and taxpayers by doing away with investigations for cooperative taxpayers.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, December 11, 2006
2nd Week of Advent
Damasus

1st Reading:	Is 35:1-10
Gospel:	Luke 5:17-26

One day Jesus was teaching and many Pharisees and teachers of the Law had come from every part of Galilee and Judea and even from Jerusalem. They were sitting there while the power of the Lord was at work to heal the sick. Then some men brought a paralyzed man who lay on his mat. They tried to enter the house to place him before Jesus, but they couldn't find a way through the crowd. So they went up on the roof and, removing the tiles, they lowered him on his mat into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, "My friend, your sins are forgiven." At once the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees began to wonder, "This man insults God! Who can forgive sins but only God?

But Jesus knew their thoughts and asked them, "Why are you reacting like this? Which is easier to say: 'Your sins are forgiven,' or: 'Get up and walk?' Now you shall know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." And Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Get up, take your mat and go home." At once the man stood before them. He took up the mat he had been lying on and went home praising God.

Amazement seized the people and they praised God. They were filled with a holy fear and said, "What wonderful things we have seen today!"

Commentary

Advent—God is coming towards us. And even the earth itself, desert and steppe will respond to his presence passing by. Human beings will take heart, be strengthened and respond like earth. We are being saved, ransomed, and crowned with joy. This is God's recompense and vindication for those who wait and are faithful. Jesus' presence calls forth this freedom, this healing and wholeness. Jesus forgives and heals when he sees the paralytic's friends lowering him through the roof. Who are we bringing into the presence of Jesus? Are we living and responding to Jesus' presence among us or discussing who Jesus might be?

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Day 1 December 15, 2006
10:00 AM - Opening Ceremonies • 11:00 AM - FORUM 1: Ang Kahalagahan Ng Pag-nenegosyo • 12:00 NN - Barcelona Movie Launch • 1:35 PM - FORUM 2: May "K" Ba Akong Mag-negosyo? • 2:25 PM - FORUM 3: Negosyong Namumukod-tangi Para Sa Mga Bagong Bayani • 4:00 PM - FORUM 4a: Iba't-ibang Mapagkukunan Ng Perang Pampuhunan • 4:55 PM - FORUM 4b: Ating Palaguin Ang Perang-Kikitain • 5:45 PM - Heart-To-Heart With OFWs • 6:30PM - Game Show With Celebrities • 7:30 PM - Market! Market! Simbang Gabi

Day 2 December 16, 2006
10:30 AM - Go Negosyo Day 1 Highlights • 11:50 AM - Awarding of the Inspiring OFW Entrepreneurs • 12:00 NN - FORUM 5: Go Negosyo, Negosyanteng OFW! (The Inspiring Entrepreneurs Forum) • 12:45 PM - Barcelona Movie Screening • 2:45 PM - FORUM 6: Pagpapalakbo ng Negosyo, Habang Ako'y Nasa Ibayo (Running a Long-Distance Business) • 3:35 PM - Testimony of Sandy Javier of Andok's Manok • 3:55 PM - FORUM 7: Pagpapahalaga Sa Sarili, Pamilya At Bayan; Susi Sa Pangmatagalang Tagumpay At Makabuluhang Negosyo • 6:00 PM - Game Show With Celebrities • 7:30 PM - Market! Market! Simbang Gabi

Day 3 December 17, 2006
10:30 AM - Go Negosyo Day 1 and Day 2 Highlights • 12:00 NN - Game Show With Celebrities • 1:00 PM - Sponsors' Segment • 3:00 PM - The Franchise Advantage - The Philippine Franchise Association (PFA) • 6:00 PM - Game Show With Celebrities • 7:30 PM - Market! Market! Simbang Gabi

(Admission is FREE! Plus you get business tips, video greetings, raffle prizes, goodies and games in between forums.)

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Dec. 16 – Saturday (1:00pm to 6:00pm)
Leo Riingen (Informatics), Lin Deres (Goldilocks), Tess Ngan Tian (Lots-A-Pizza), Paulo Tibig (Vintel Logistics), Merle Alferez (MSA Review Center), Victor Tan (Babson Jeans), Lloyd Luna (Lloyd Luna Communications), Patrick Pasengco (Philippine Vending Group), Myla Villanueva (MDI Group), Dean Danny Cabulay (FEU)

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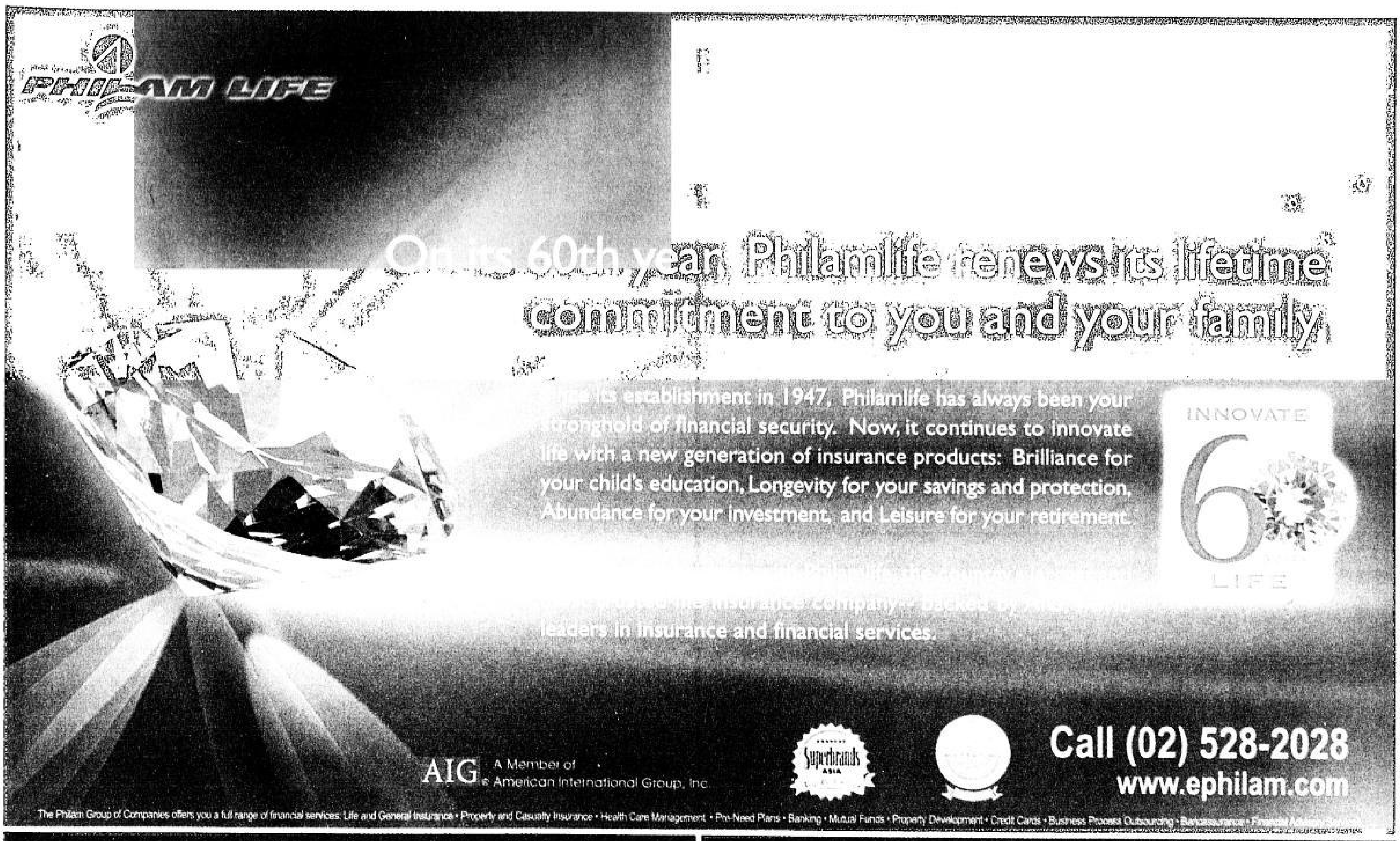

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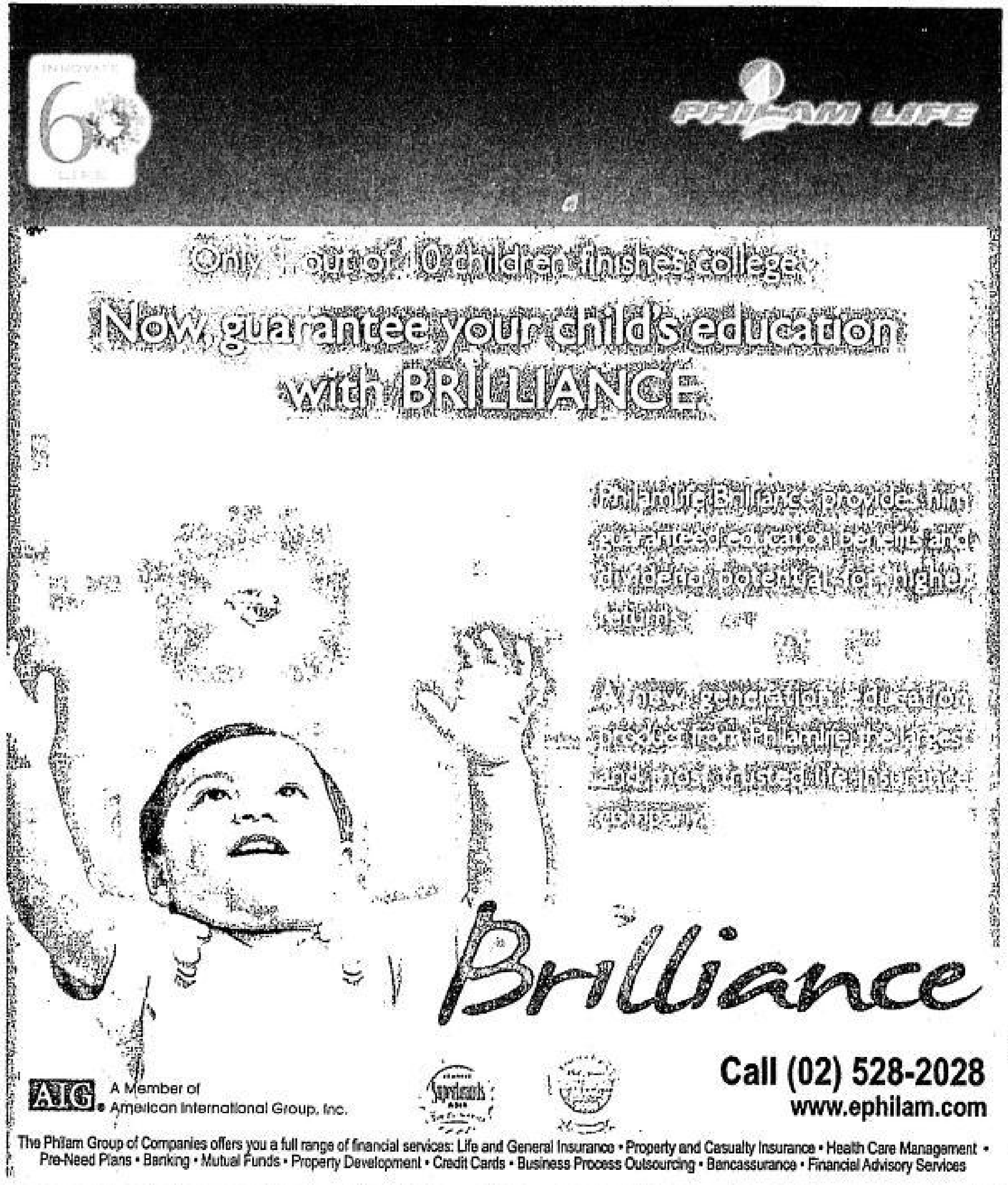

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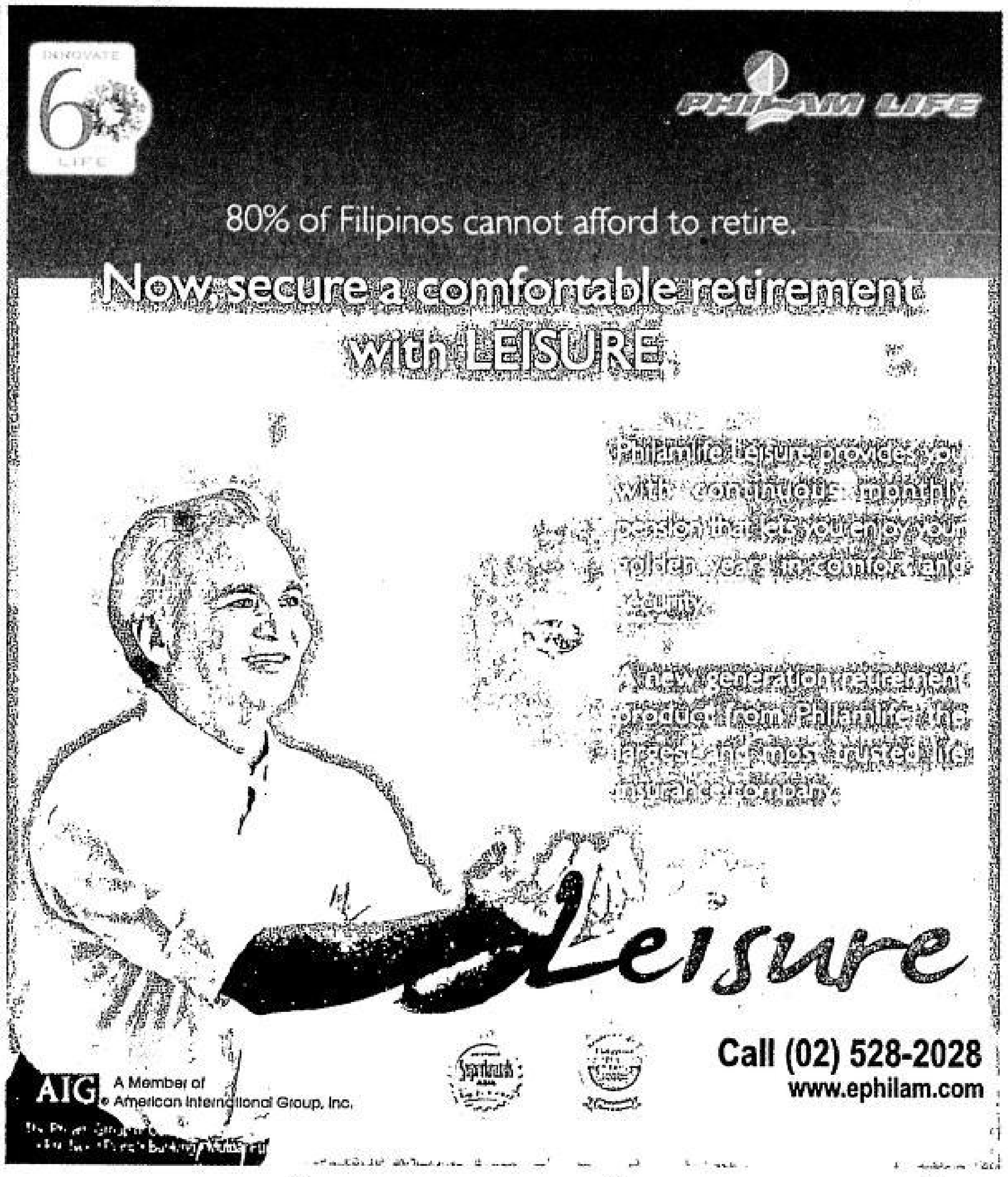

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Pagcor beats CBCP to venue of Dec. 15 rally

From page A1

Quitorio, CBCP spokesperson, said.

"We learned that Pagcor was using the grandstand for an activity," he told the INQUIRER yesterday.

One bishop, who was planning to mobilize his diocese for the rally, expressed the suspicion that Malacañang, through its gambling agency, had intentionally reserved the venue to foil the CBCP activity.

The CBCP was considering the grandstand as the venue for a massive gathering against the Arroyo administration's plan to amend the 1987 Constitution using the administration-dominated House of Representatives convened as a constituent assembly (Con-ass).

Evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva's three-million-strong Bangon Pilipinas party and Bro. Mike Velarde's Catholic charismatic group El Shaddai were to join the prayer rally.

Quitorio said a staff member of the CBCP was shown a copy of the Pagcor receipt when she went to reserve the Quirino Grandstand on Friday.

He said he would send another staff member to double-check the Pagcor reservation today. "It's still not clear to us what Pagcor will exactly do at the grandstand," he said.

But in case the CBCP could still not reserve the Quirino Grandstand on Dec. 15, it might hold its rally either at Liwasang Bonifacio on the same day or at the grandstand on Dec. 17, according to Quitorio.

Everything is go

The organizing committee headed by CBCP president Archbishop Angel Lagdameo was set to meet early this week to finalize the plans. A member of the committee is former Ambassador to the Vatican Henrietta de Villa, according to Quitorio.

"So far, everything is a go," he said. "We still haven't received any official word from the CBCP leadership whether or not to cancel the prayer rally in light of the recent political developments."

Quitorio was referring to a report that President Macapagal-Arroyo had asked administration members of the House to drop the much-criticized Con-ass as a way of changing the Charter.

Msgr. Meliton Oso, executive director of the Jaro Archdiocese social action center, said the nationwide prayer rally would push through because "we cannot let our guard down.

"We cannot trust them (administration congressmen)," Oso said.

Dawn Mass

Lagdameo will lead the prayer rally on the grounds of the Jaro Cathedral in Iloilo from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The rally will culminate in the first "Simbang Gabi" (Dawn Mass) to be celebrated by Lagdameo and other priests of the diocese, said Oso.

The CBCP wants the 86 dioceses of the Catholic Church to voice their opposition to Con-ass simultaneously, Oso said.

A bishop yesterday said there was more to the surprising Malacañang announcement. He said he had learned that Speaker Jose de Venecia had been told by Ms Arroyo to pull out the Con-ass plan.

But De Venecia instead came up with the condition that the Senate adopt a resolution calling for a constitutional convention within 72 hours from today. If the Senate failed to do so, De Venecia said the House would proceed with Con-ass.

"It seems that De Venecia didn't follow the President's order," the bishop told the INQUIRER.

Villanueva's Bangon party was suspicious of Malacañang's and De Venecia's announcement on Con-ass.

Bangon spokesperson Teodoro Pascua noted that mere words of the President couldn't stop the planned Con-ass tomorrow.

"It's a legal act that created the Tuesday affair," he told the INQUIRER. "They should come up with another resolution to prevent the Con-ass from really happening."

Pascua said Bangon would still join the CBCP rally later this week on top of its participation in another protest action in San Juan today.

Militant farmers said they would also push through with planned protests.

Some 500 members of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas will camp out today at the Batasan complex where the House is located, complete with tents and rain gear.

KMP information officer Carl Ala said peasants from the KMP's Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog chapters would be coming to Quezon City today. The numbers are expected to swell to thousands before the huge rally set on Dec. 15 by various religious groups.

The farmers have prepared provisions good for several days or "until Gloria (President Macapagal-Arroyo) and JDV (House Speaker Jose de Venecia) completely drop the constituent assembly."

"Everyday protests will continue to deliver the knockout punch against the constituent assembly. We will not stop until Gloria and JDV completely withdraw Con-ass and Charter change," Ala said. *With reports from Blanche S. Rivera in Manila and Chito Fuentes, Inquirer Visayas*

3 Filipino boxers share same pair...

From page A1

la, Marcial and Boholst to share one kit to fight. We had seven boxers in our team and now we have four left to compete."

Manny Lopez, president of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines, and William "Butch" Ramirez, chair of the Philippine Sports Commission, could not be reached for comment on the embarrassing situation.

Happier of three

Despite the mix-up, Payla was left the happier of the three boxers as Marcial and Boholst failed to reach the semifinals.

That meant the 27-year-old Payla, an Army enlisted man from Cagayan de Oro City, had the shirt and shorts all to himself on Sunday when he fought and defeated China's Yang Bo to earn him a berth in the finals. *(See story on Late Sports, Page A24)*.

And it comes as a convenience for Payla who, after all, was the first pug to give the Philippines something to hope for in the boxing competitions here after completely dominating Jitender Kumer of India in an RSC-Os (referee stop contest-outscored) match to reach the medal round.

The PSC, which failed to get support from the private sector, had earmarked no more than P30 million for the 240 athletes it sent to do battle in Doha

Insiders said the PSC had been saddled with funding problems after the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) failed to remit its P11-million annual contributions to the PSC the past two years.

The PCSO, in turn, had run out of funds because it paid for the Philippine Health Insurance cards of indigents who were enrolled in the Philhealth program in 2004. The program, according to political opponents of President Macapagal-Arroyo, was used to support her presidential campaign that same year.

Boxing history

Whatever, Payla may just make history by becoming the first Filipino who has had to share the same shirt and shorts with two losing boxers and win an Asian Games gold for his country.

Marcial bombed out less than an hour after Payla had booked his place in the final eight, running smack into the experienced fists of Kazakhstan's Galib Jafarov, a former world champion, who dealt the courageous Filipino a 27-12 beating.

Boholst lost his bout against South Korea's Shin Myung-hoon.

Light Genebert Basadre, super lightfly sub Godfrey Castro and bantam Joan Tipon were the other Filipinos who have barged into medal fights—although they didn't have to share their fighting kits with anyone. *AFP*

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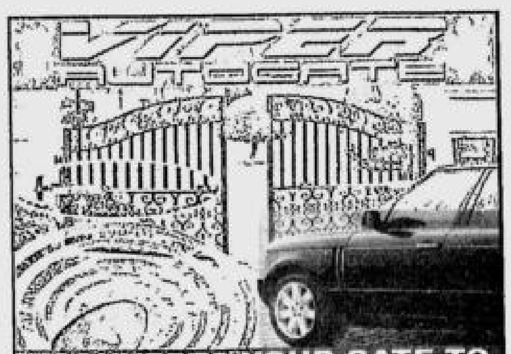

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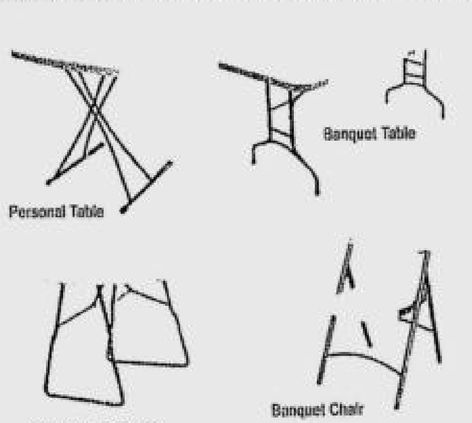

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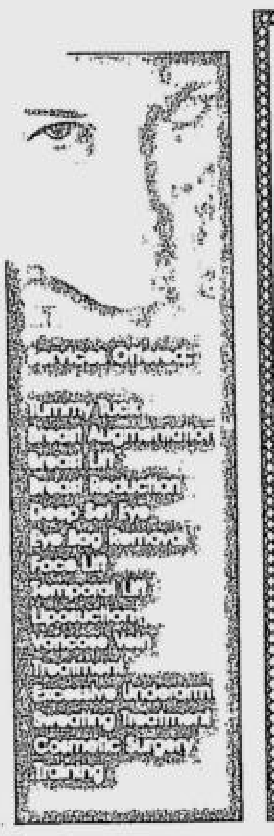

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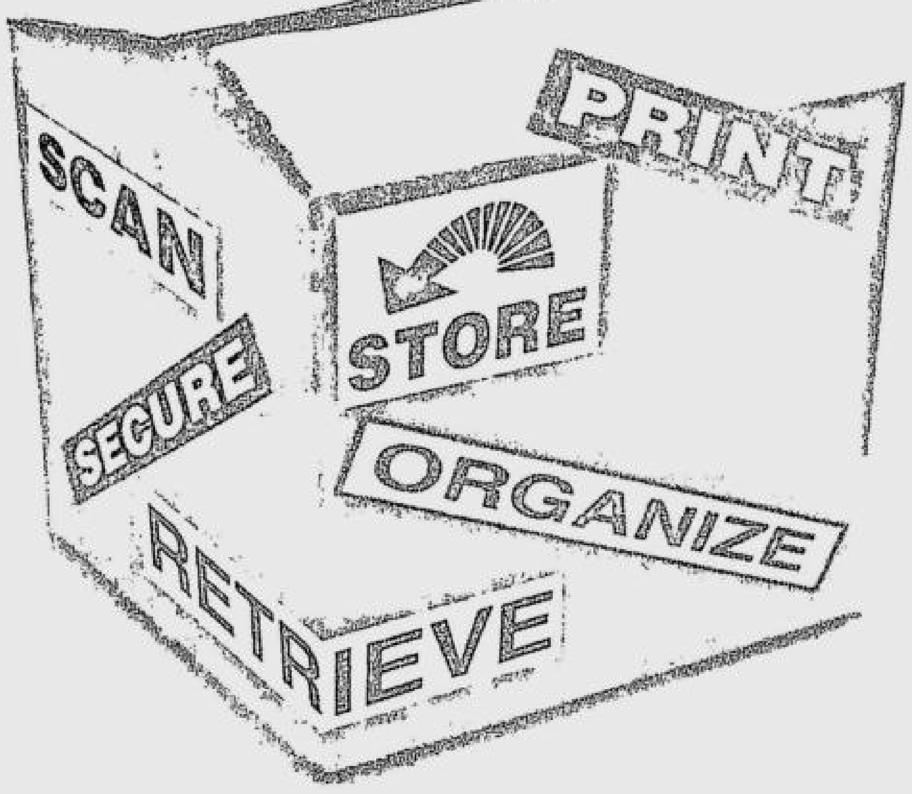

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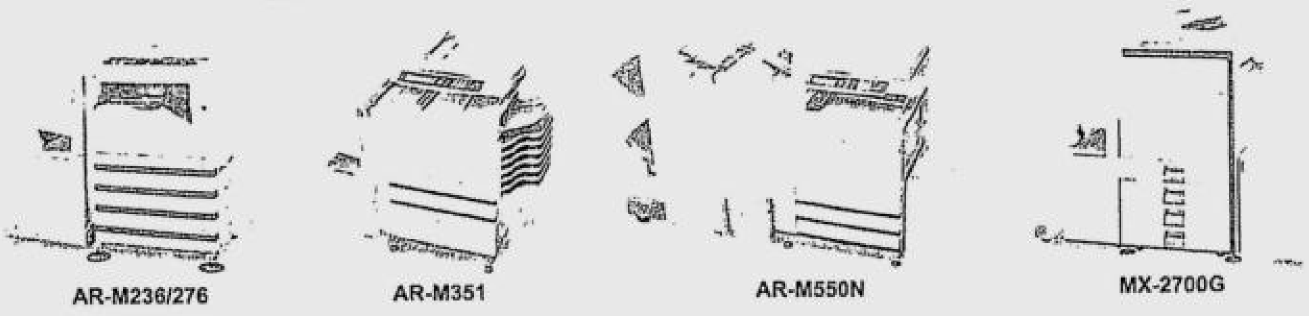

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Globe and OWWA honor Model OFW Families

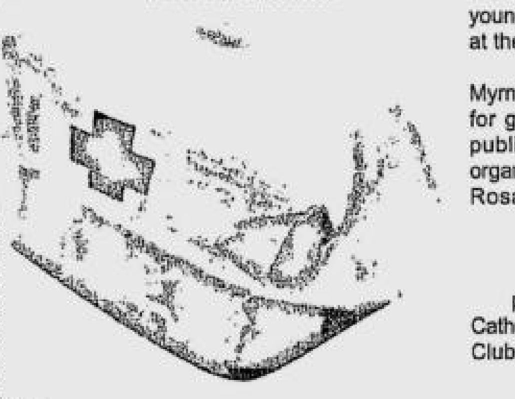
An overachieving nurse from Batangas and her engineer husband, a dockworker from Bacolod who wouldn't be denied a college education, and an engineer from Jolo who was an OFW long before the term was coined were this year's principal honorees at the Model OFW Family of the Year Awards (MOFYA).

*They each won a **Camella house and lot**, a **Globe Autoload Max retailership** and a **trophy**, among other prizes, from the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and Globe, major supporter of the event.*

Nominees had to meet strict criteria: at least four years of OFW experience for the head of the family; a college degree for at least one child in the family; a solid reputation in the community; and good management of overseas earnings with sustained income from investments or any legitimate entrepreneurial activity. After a daunting screening procedure, seventeen regional winners were chosen and out of them, three families emerged as the Model OFW Families of Year.

From OFW nurse to outstanding civil servant

In 1978, way before the recent boom in overseas demand for nurses, **Myrna Sevilla Punay** was a well respected member of the staff at the Riyadh Al Kharj Hospital in Saudi Arabia. She had gone abroad to support her family's finances and to help with her paraplegic father's medication.



In 1980, she married Mario Punay who also worked in Riyadh as a civil engineer in the Ministry of Water and Agriculture. They were blessed with four children, twin girls Maria Jamilla and Maria Carmina, another girl, Maria Lyn and a son, Marion Joseph. All graduates from the top universities in the country except for the youngest who is still taking up Architecture at the Far Eastern University.

Myrna Punay came back to the Philippines for good in 1986 and is now busy with public service, socio-civic and church organizations. She's been a Director of the Rosario Water District, a member of Municipal Health Board, and an adviser of Municipal Council in Batangas. She's served as the president of the Mother Butlers, Catholic Women's League and Inner Wheel Club of the Philippines. In 2004, she was also recognized as *One of the Ten Most Outstanding Women in Batangas.*

Her husband Mario now manages their construction and hardware business as well as their accumulated properties in Paranaque, Pasig, Pangasinan, Lipa, and in Rosario Batangas.

From ship electrician to successful businessman

Melchor Ca-ayon was born to a simple family in Bacolod. His parents had no permanent employment and were sustaining their family by making "puto". As a young boy, Melchor took part in the small family business, helping sell the native rice cakes.

Melchor started to work at the Banago port in Bacolod as a "kargador" in order to supplement the money he earned from selling rice cakes. He earned a college degree in Technical Electricity at the Negros Occidental College of Arts and Trades with the support of his parents and a scholarship from the Filipinas Foundation Inc.

He then worked as a freelance electrician in Manila while applying for jobs abroad through various placement agencies. During this time, he met and fell in love with Lillian, an employee of St. Scholastica's Academy.

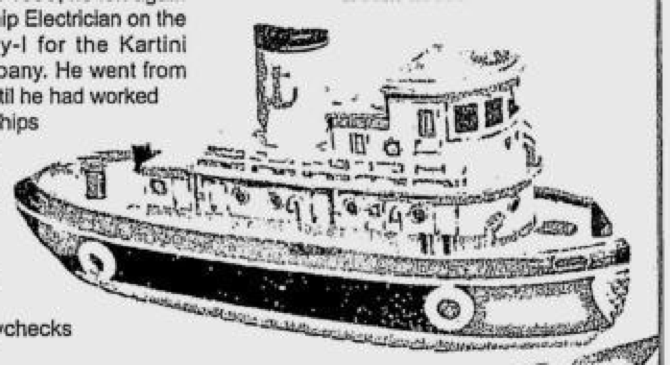
Like countless Filipinos before him, Melchor realized that his dreams could only be achieved by working abroad. He made the rounds of placement agencies and it got to a point where he'd used up all his savings on placement fees. The whole family had no choice but to move in to the garage of his wife's employer just to make ends meet. Swallowing his pride, he went back to Bacolod to borrow money from friends for placement fees.

1991 was the year his life would change for the better. AGAP Arabia Limited took him on as an Industrial Electrician. After a brief homecoming in 1993, he left again to work as a Ship Electrician on the M/V Discovery-I for the Kartini Shipping Company. He went from ship to ship, until he had worked almost all the ships of the line.

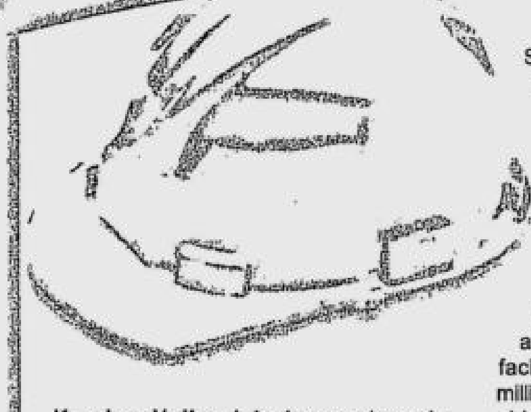
All throughout his years overseas, Melchor never forgot to help others. His paychecks were always split two ways. Half was for his own family, and the other half given to brothers, sisters and a niece for their education.

Through his savings from his earnings, Melchor and his wife were able to start various businesses such as a sari-sari store, a stall at the Burgos public market in Bacolod, pedicabs, and recently a fleet of taxis.

As a result of his labors abroad, Melchor's children have received the kind of education most parents dream about.



From pioneer OFW engineer to community leader



Kagim Halim Jajurie was born in Jolo, Sulu to a prominent family. He graduated with a Civil Engineering degree from the Mapua Institute of Technology and later earned a postgraduate degree from the SEATO Graduate School of Engineering.

In 1964, long before the term OFW was coined and a Philippine embassy was even established, Kagim accepted a job offer to work in Saudi Arabia as one of the few pioneer overseas workers. He started out as a Highway Designer for Wilson-Murrow Inc. and then moved on to work at the Ministry of Communications of the Saudi Government as a Design Engineer.

For over 30 years, he was part of the design and construction of over 50,000 kilometers of highways and bridges all over the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Of all his build sites, his most memorable was the network of roads in the Holy City of Makkah, Mudzdalifa and Mina. This amazing network of roads and bridges facilitated the movement of over three million pilgrims during the Hajj period and aided in the development of the local townships.

In 1996, after the finalization of the Peace Agreement, which he also helped negotiate, he came back to the Philippines and was appointed ARMM-DPWH Regional Secretary. At the same time, he was also made Executive Director of the Salam Peace Project and Project Director of the Tulay ng Pangulo sa Mindanao (SZOPAD Project). Remarkably, for the relatively short duration of the SZOPAD Project of only three years and four months, he was able to build 526 bridges of various specifications all over the ARMM.

33 years of overseas employment have given Kagim and his family a good life. They now own a dream country home, rest houses, rice fields, a commercial apartment building and a condominium unit in Manila.

Just as important, Kagim was able to make solid investments in the future of his children. His two eldest children graduated at the American University in Cairo. His third child, is now involved in public service as the Municipal Councilor in Titay, Zamboanga. The youngest daughter is now an OFW working in the place where Kagim found the means to make his dreams come true - Saudi Arabia.

Globe also congratulates the 14 outstanding regional finalists:

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Region VIII	Marquez, Teresito C. and Family
Region X	Doromal, Glen dC. and Family
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Region XII	Tabasa, Benjamin A. and Family
ARMM	Langkuno, Abdulkarim T. and Family
CARAGA	Jayoma, Salvador B. and Family

Three different families with three different stories. All driven by a dream of a better future. The same dream that drives over 10 million Filipinos abroad every year. And the great thing is wherever their dreams may take them, Filipinos can always rely on Globe to stay close to the families they leave behind. And the families who stay behind can always rely on Globe to help them stay connected to the ones they love abroad.

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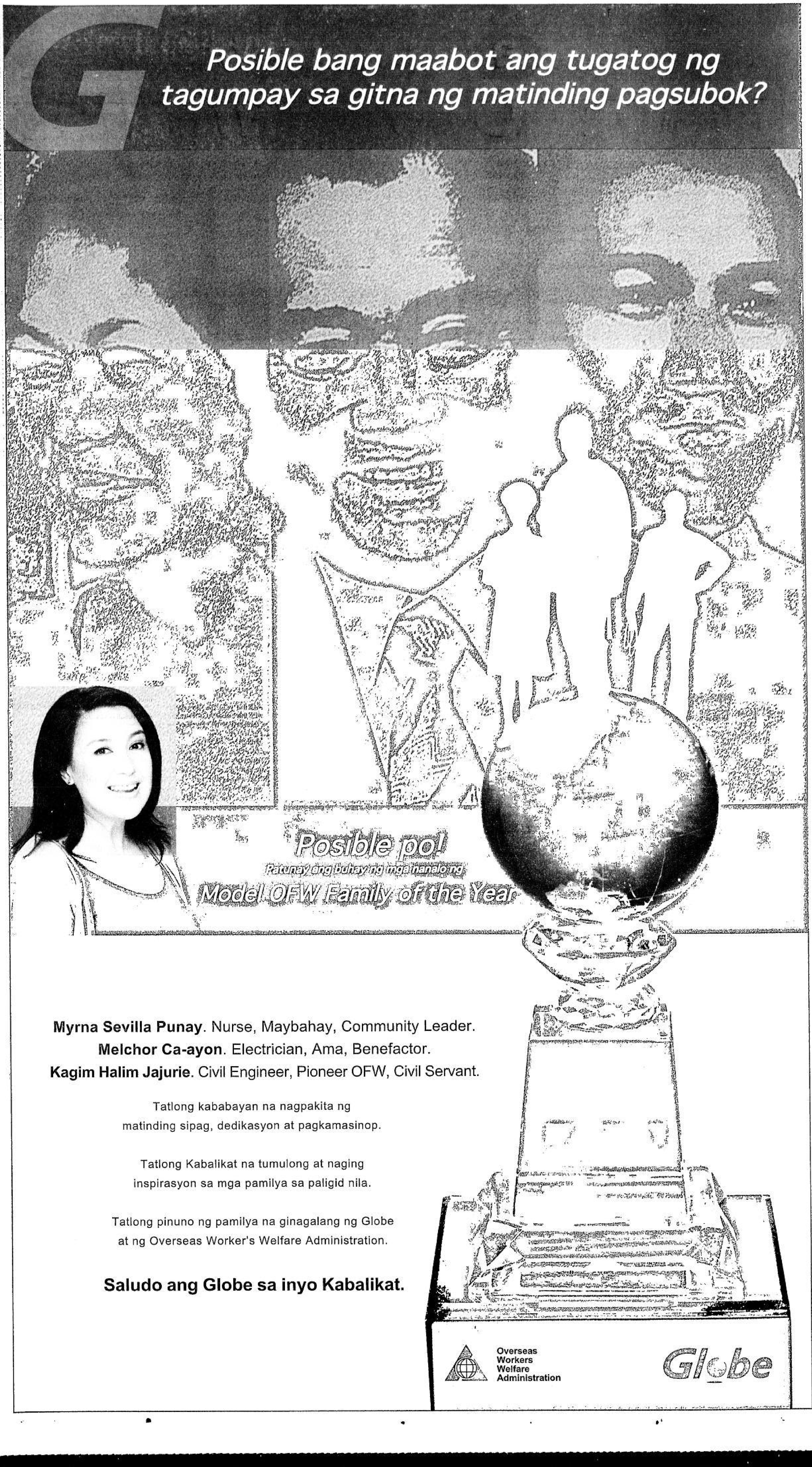
Posible bang maabot ang tugatog ng tagumpay sa gitna ng matinding pagsubok?
Posible po!
Patunay ang buhay ng mga nanalo ng
Model OFW Family of the Year

Myrna Sevilla Punay. Nurse, Maybahay, Community Leader.
Melchor Ca-ayon. Electrician, Ama, Benefactor.
Kagim Halim Jajurie. Civil Engineer, Pioneer OFW, Civil Servant.

Tatlong kababayan na nagpakita ng matinding sipag, dedikasyon at pagkamasinop.

Tatlong Kabalikat na tumulong at naging inspirasyon sa mga pamilya sa paligid nila.

Tatlong pinuno ng pamilya na ginagalang ng Globe at ng Overseas Worker's Welfare Administration.

Saludo ang Globe sa inyo Kabalikat.

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OPINION

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Perfect storm

EDITORIAL

THE DECISION TO POSTPONE THE 12TH ASEAN summit, which was to be held in Cebu this week, continues to draw controversy. After typhoon "Seniang" skirted Cebu yesterday (it killed at least two persons and injured three more, in other provinces), the second-guessing started all over again.

Ambassador Marciano Paynor Jr., the head of the summit's organizing committee, ended up, once again, on the defensive. "We still feel that we made the right decision," he told reporters on Sunday.

Maybe. But Paynor's crisp answers turn all soggy under pressure from all the leaks that have sprung. (We refer to the metaphorical version, although Cebu Gov. Gwen Garcia has a lot to answer for in the rushed construction of the embarrassingly leaky Cebu International Convention Center.)

Other sources in the foreign affairs department have intimated that the real reason for the postponement lay elsewhere: either in the discovery of an actual terrorist threat, as suggested by last week's wave of adverse travel advisories, or in the political storm generated by the House majority's decision to convene a Senate-less Constituent Assembly.

The speculation became more intense when the national weather bureau announced that it had recommended the exact opposite: That the organizers proceed with the summit.

When this was pointed out during the news briefing Paynor held to announce the postponement, he and other officials were hard-pressed to explain the final decision. After all, they had cited inclement weather as the reason for the postponement; why did the organizers decline to accept the weather bureau's recommendation?

Because of other considerations, the officials answered. President Macapagal-Arroyo would need to focus on the task of rescue and recovery in case the last typhoon of the year caused yet another calamity. This need, however, conflicts with the President's role as summit host; hence the decision.

Maybe. This seems out of character for a Chief Executive who is famously a hard worker and a multi-tasker.

But creatively responding to political crises—that is more like the President we know. At the height of the Hello Garci scandal, she unilaterally decided to rearrange national holidays; the maneuver worked, draining the streets of thousands of protesters. Accounting for the costs involved came later, when business groups complained loudly about lost productivity.

Her political instincts have not always been sound, but among today's political leaders she is the one with the surest touch. Written off for dead on July 8, 2005, she has managed to upend the political landscape she would have been buried in. Today, she enjoys decided political advantage even over the congressmen who have protected her against two impeachment attempts or the local officials who have rushed to support her.

This is why there is reason to believe the leakers: The President must have realized in the last few days that the public outrage generated by the House majority's decision to change the rules, to act unilaterally and self-servingly, was nothing less than massive.

The appeal from the Catholic bishops must have worried the President, but truth to tell it was not entirely unexpected. The candid statements of Mike Velarde of the El Shaddai Catholic renewal group and unmistakable signals from the powerful Iglesia ni Cristo, however, must have come as a shock.

The President must have consulted the calendar and realized that, while the main prayer rally was originally called for the day after the Asean summit itself, various other rallies and street protests would fill the days leading to the summit. Anything less than maximum tolerance for the demonstrations would undermine the government's chosen theme of "one caring and sharing community" for the Asean meetings.

Typhoon "Seniang" provided the President with the perfect cover. Accounting for the costs involved, especially for her beloved bailiwick of Cebu, will have to come later.

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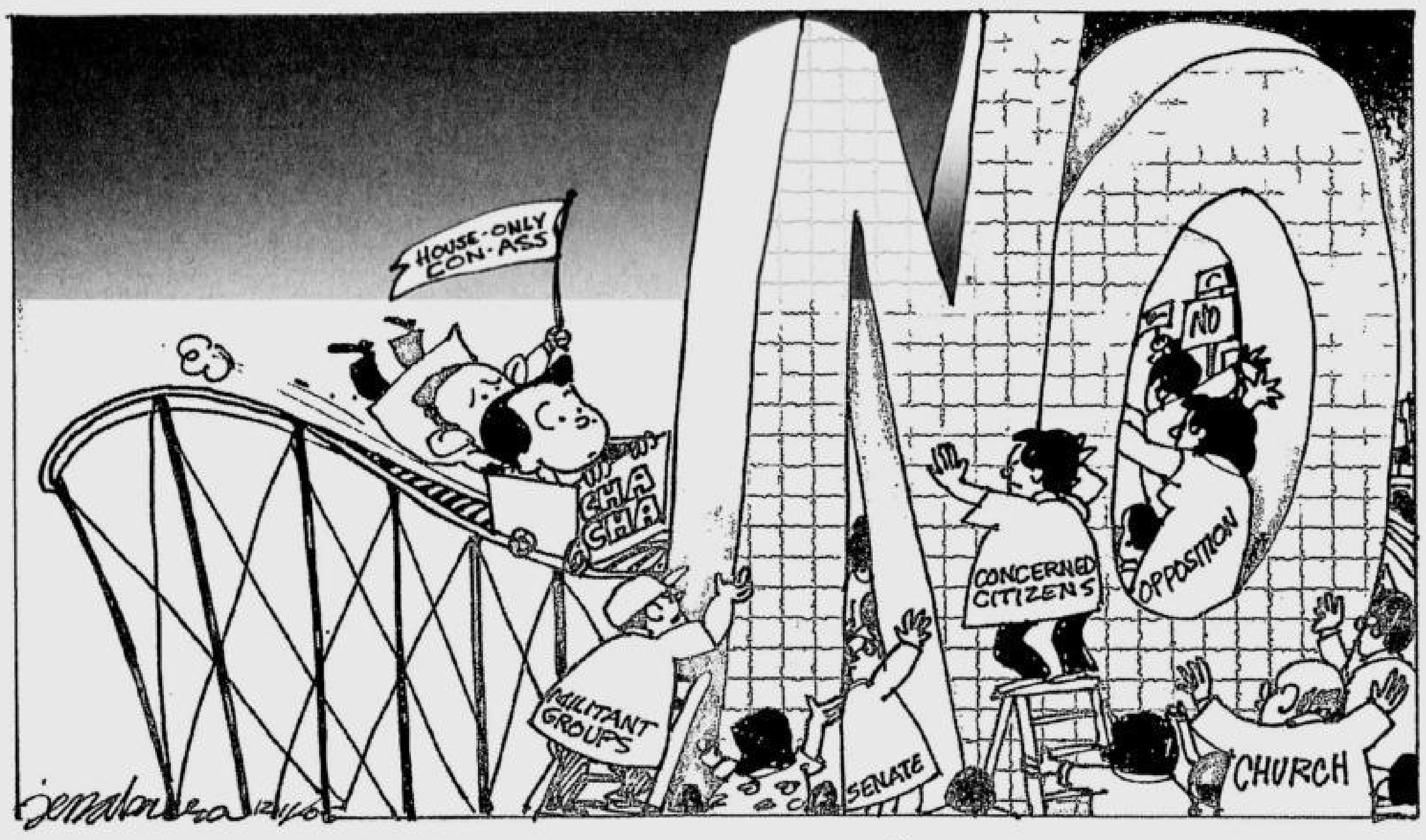

House is major source of corruption

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THIS TIME THE "CON-ASSES" IN THE HOUSE of Representatives bit more than they could chew. What they did the past week—passing an illegal resolution for Congress to convene as a constituent assembly without the participation of the Senate—was too much for the people.

Their elected representatives, of all Filipinos, were not only going to violate the Constitution, they were also going to trample on the rights of their citizens. In response, to show their outrage to their "representatives," the citizens started mobilizing to hold this week a huge people power rally on Commonwealth Avenue, near the Batasan where the Con-asses were supposed to convene.

The massive people power gathering, to be led by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines and participated in by all the big religious denominations and charismatic movements—plus almost all the other groups opposed to the administration—promised to dwarf all the other earlier rallies against President Macapagal-Arroyo. It could be another people power, like the previous ones that toppled two presidents. But this one appeared it could sweep away not only GMA but also the Con-asses.

Seeing the gathering storm, GMA persuaded her co-conspirator, Speaker Jose de Venecia, to give up the harebrained Con-ass. She herself was persuaded by the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines, the partner of Sigaw ng Bayan in the equally harebrained people's initiative, to withdraw support from the Con-ass. Their constituencies were overwhelmingly against it.

That was why JDV, the Darth Vader of the GMA Empire, beat a hasty retreat. They would not push through with the Con-ass, he said in a press conference.

But, of course, he had to save face. They would give it up, he said, only if the Senate would agree to a Con-con. The elections would go on as scheduled next year for local officials as well as for the delegates to the Con-con. But he added a threat. He gave the Senate an ultimatum: Agree to a Con-con within 72 hours or else they would push through with the hated Con-ass.

But who is JDV to give a co-equal branch of government an ultimatum? That is the trouble with being the House Speaker too long. JDV now thinks he can bamboozle everybody the way he has bamboozled his colleagues with perks and pork. He thinks that he can also bamboozle the people if the House that he controls tries to give legitimacy to an illegitimate act. He has begun to act like a tinhorn Marcos, another dictator but a puny one.

As for GMA, she is a survivor and must know how to save herself from another storm that can blow her away like Typhoon "Reming" did to many houses in Albay. She must give up all notions of changing the Constitution at this time. The people don't trust the present politicians.

A shift to a parliamentary system is JDV's last hurrah. That is the only way he can be chief executive of the country—by being prime minister. Being chief executive is his undying ambition. He already tried being president, but the people rejected him resoundingly; they chose a movie actor over a professional *trapo*. He knows he can never be elected president. No speaker of the House has ever been elected president immediately after he left the speakership. For since the Philippines became independent, the speaker has always been viewed by the people as a source of corruption in the government.

* * *

The Speaker buys his way through his colleagues by the "power of the purse." The most popular speakers of the past were those who were the fastest in signing checks and vouchers for congressmen. And because the House has the "power of the purse," it can appropriate anything in the budget to benefit itself, even resorting to "hidden insertions" in the appropriations of other departments. And I mean not only the Countrywide Development Fund and other similar worthy-sounding names. They are also inserted in the regular budgets of such departments as the Public Works and Highways, Education, Health, though in lesser amounts.

How do they do it? The budget appropriation contains a condition: The congressmen identify the projects, choose the contractors, and the contractors "kick-back" half of their profits to the congressmen. The congressmen act as de facto department secretaries in their districts, overruling the legitimate department heads. Everything that has money to be had passes through them.

Everybody knows this trend of corruption has been going on through the years, but no one does anything to prevent it. The framers of the Constitution, who were in a position to limit the opportunity open to House members to abuse their powers, failed to do this. The President knows about it but does nothing about it. On the contrary, she contributes to the corruption with her shrewd use of the pork barrel. The senators know about it but they don't stop it. Instead they participate in it. Each senator collects P200 million a year in pork barrel. To their credit, three senators—Panfilo Lacson, Alfredo Lim and Franklin Drilon—are not collecting their pork barrel. The Supreme Court knows about it, but the wise old men and women of the tribunal do not do anything unless something that is plain to see is formally presented to them.

The illegality of the Con-ass is also plain to see and the Supreme Court, notorious for very slow action, should promptly strike it down if the House goes through with its threat. This last straw could bring down another administration.

* * *

TODAY'S JOKE: Bicolanos now realize why Typhoon "Reming" lashed Albay. It was looking for Representatives Luis Villafuerte and Edcel Lagman. It missed them, so Typhoon "Seniang" was sent to find them.

A--holes

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

(I wrote this piece last Thursday simply to get the bitter taste of the constituent assembly off my mouth. I decided to come out with it as is—notwithstanding that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered it to stop and Jose de Venecia now wants a constitutional convention—to register the disgust I felt then, and now, which I imagine most of us did.)

WE MAY BE GREETING EACH OTHER "MISerable Christmas" rather than "Merry Christmas" the next few weeks. That is courtesy of the *tongressmen* who have just made it so.

Certainly they have single-handedly raised high blood pressure in this country to epidemic proportions, to go by the text messages I've been getting. Most of which end in punctuation marks that exhaust the range of symbols in the gallery of cell phones. "*Ang kapal talaga ng mukha ng mga tongressmen* (Those *tongressmen* really have thick faces)!" one message summed it up succinctly.

They actually have the gall to say they are doing this for the nation, notwithstanding that they betray the most fundamental tenet of lawmaking, which is that no lawmaker may pass a law to benefit himself. Easy to test the self-proclaimed altruism of the *tongressmen*, as my friend Oscar Orbos points out. All they have to do is to put down on paper in triplicate, using their own blood for ink, that they would resign at once and never run for public office again if they should succeed in turning this country parliamentary. For the good of the nation.

I have only one problem with that test. It presumes that the *tongressmen*'s word, like GMA's, may be trusted. GMA vowed at Jose Rizal's grave that she would never run for president again because to do so would be to wreak never-ending divisiveness upon the country. The last was the only thing that proved true. We ask the *tongressmen* to make the same vow, and all we'll be left with is poisonous liquid on tissue paper, whose best destination is deep down the bowels of toilet bowls.

Which brings me to why the *tongressmen*, despite having no backing from the Constitution, the courts, or the people (the only *sigaw* you will hear is not fit to print), are doing this. Which is: GMA got away with murder, they reckon they can, too.

The fact that GMA cheated in the elections and got away with it has flushed all rules in this country down the drain. The only law left in this country is the law of the jungle. If you're a public official, you now think: Who the hell cares if something is undemocratic, unconstitutional, or unpopular? Or never mind unpopular, an object of undiluted detestation by the public? GMA has shown by the fact that she is ruling to this day—an iniquity the *tongressmen* themselves contributed mightily to when they struck down the impeachment bids against her—that all it takes to hold power in this country is to want it. The voters be damned, the public be damned, the nation be damned. Or indeed more than want it, want it with every fiber of your being, enough to lie, cheat and steal for it. No, more than that, enough to kill for it. You're capable of that, you can do anything you please in this country. You're up to that, you can do anything you please with this country.

It's the rule of thugs. It's a gangster state. Nothing more or less than the one Marcos presided over during martial law. Or probably even less: Marcos had so much more finesse. Today, the presidential emblem has become a mailed fist. Today, the *tongressional* one has become an upraised middle finger.

There is a caveat to this, which is that all this has happened, and is happening, because we have allowed it to. Call it political fatigue, call it cynicism, call it stupidity (which it is: Life goes on? Death goes on!), but we're party to the making of that gangster state. There are no tyrants where there are no slaves. There are no wolves where there are no sheep. There are no gangsters where there are no terrified victims. The *tongressmen* are doing this not just because they think they are powerful enough to do it, they are doing it because they think we are powerless enough to stop it.

Ah, but that is where GMA and allies have finally made their (fatal) mistake. Rizal, GMA's favorite whipping boy, did say it once: The *indios* may be patient, but they are not infinitely patient. When they are insulted and branded idiots apart from being injured and branded serfs, they rise with hatred in their eyes and put down tyrants. And Marcos, GMA's favorite non-president (and non-prime minister; he claimed both titles), did find out once (and for all) that when Filipinos are abused beyond even the national animal's capacity to take abuse, they rise with bolos in hand, crying "*Tama na, sobra na, palitan na!*"

Listen to the sounds of a nation heaving. Listen to the groans and flexing of muscles of a nation rousing from stupor. Listen to the gnashing of teeth and the thrashing about of Florante recovering his wits only to discover he is bound to a tree. Listen to the cries of the bishops discovering we are God's creatures after all, made after His image; which is not the image of a mongrel crawling on all fours. Listen to the sighs of the businessman and the road dredger, the NGO worker and the overseas worker, the nun and the whore, the leper and the whole, the sinner and the saint, rediscovering they are human beings after all, born with dignity and deserving of respect. Listen to the shouts of a nation, like a man experiencing pinpricks of pain after feeling returns to his numb arm or leg, remembering he was once proud and free. Listen to the rumbling of marching feet down the streets and alleyways, gathering force like a storm. Listen to the trumpet blasts sounding the hour is at hand.

There may be a reason to wish one another a "Merry Christmas" this Christmas after all.

Saving face, eggs on face

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

IT COULD ONLY BE THAT JOSE DE VENECIA and his army saw the futility of their cause both legally and politically. The House Con-ass resolution was dead in the water. A face-saving device had to be sought. He thought an ultimatum to the Senate would do. He got eggs instead.

But why was their cause hopeless in this liturgical Season of Hope?

Simple. Let us look at the matter soberly. Never mind that there may have been hysterical reaction all around. Begin with what the House of Representatives did in the dead of night. The House amended its own rules dispensing with the requirement that proposals for constitutional amendment should go through the wringer of three readings. It was a rejection of rationality.

Three readings, as denizens of Congress know, means that a proposal's title is read on **first reading** and assigned to a committee for study. The committee report is next discussed on **second reading** where every provision is debated upon and voted on. On **third reading** a clean copy of everything that has been approved on second reading is presented for final approval. No more debates take place on third reading. That is how rational beings behave.

What the House approved was to short-circuit everything into one reading. Committee study would be dispensed with and instead plenary debate would take place immediately on ready-made proposals. Definitely this would shorten the process and facilitate railroading.

I agree that the House can amend its own rules. The Supreme Court does it with its rules. The Judicial and Bar Council does it. In every case the issue is not so much legality as propriety or fairness or even morality. But it is important to note that, whether legal, improper or immoral, what are amended are just the rules of the House, nothing more. Hence, because only the internal operation of the House is involved, the House may legally—even if immorally—dispense with the requirement of three readings. This, after all, is a rule made by the House itself for the constituent process, even if three readings are required by the Constitution for the legislative process.

What became obvious, however, was that, by amending its internal rules, the House planned to dispense with the participation of the Senate. That, to my mind, would have been an unwarranted long jump fit for a spot in Doha. Dispensing with the participation of the Senate would involve a change not just of the House rules but also of the constitutional provision on Charter change.

The Constitution gives the authority to propose amendments to Congress. Congress has two houses. Both must take part in the process. I am sure that the bright lawyers of the House knew this. But they did it just the same with full knowledge and consent. In my book, that would be mortal sin. But they did not seem to care because they expected absolution from the almighty Palace and were hoping for one from the Supreme Court.

Will a mere invitation from the House addressed to individual senators make the exercise a joint enterprise of House and Senate? Again I am sure that the bright lights in the House knew in their sober moments that it will not. What is needed is a resolution of the majority of the Senate indicating the desire to participate. The claim that refusal to participate would mean a waiver of Senate prerogative is hogwash. And I am sure the bright lights of the House knew this.

Let us suppose, however, that the Senate resolves to participate. Must the two houses be in joint session? I have always maintained that there is nothing in the Constitution which commands them to be in joint session or prohibits them from being in joint session. They can be in one place in joint session or they can do their thing where they are as they are. But joint session or not, what the Constitution commands is at least "joint action." Both must agree to participate in a constituent process. Without one or the other, there is no constituent assembly; just as without one or the other, there is no Congress.

The issue of whether there should be joint or separate voting is distinct from the issue of whether there should be joint action or not. It is only after both chambers have decided to act as a constituent assembly that they can debate about whether they should vote jointly or separately. What I seem to be hearing is that the House wants to dispense with the participation of the Senate and effectively also exclude them from the vote. It's a double-barreled shotgun! Are the bright lights serious or speaking tongue-in-cheek?

What is my take on the issue of joint or separate voting? I have expressed my view on this in earlier columns. My view is that separate voting is of the essence to a bicameral Congress. The structure of Congress demands it. Separate voting therefore is the rule. This can be dispensed with only if there is a specific constitutional provision prescribing joint voting, as the Constitution does in the matter of martial law declaration by the President.

I appeal to the House for rationality. If you are thinking that the Supreme Court will support whatever Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and De Venecia want, please do not insult the members of the Supreme Court. Do not think that the new Chief Justice will sacrifice his reputation on the altar of GMA. Justices who have nothing or little to lose might, but not the Chief. He said recently something about apples and oranges. As the scholastics would put it, *verbum sap sat* (a word to the wise is enough).

'Nessun dorma'

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Noralyn Mustafa

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO'S ALLIES IN Congress have done it again. And they could not have chosen a worse time to ram down our throats their diabolical plan to perpetuate themselves in power. With natural disasters coming one after the other, leaving behind them tragedy, misery and loss; and with the 12th Asean Summit scheduled to begin this week (the summit has originally been postponed to January next year), we need this latest congressional imbroglio like we need a hole in the head.

In their panic and desperation to abort the midterm elections next year, they plunged into this last-ditch effort to legitimize the presidency of Ms Arroyo and extend her term, as well as theirs, indefinitely; they ignored the fact that time was not on their side. And that was when logic and reason left them.

What was more tragic, they inadvertently revealed what they thought of the Filipino people (based probably on the fact that it was this constituency that voted them into office)— a nation of morons—forgetting completely that we can still distinguish insanity when we see it, as we did in that infamous session.

Then, realizing at last that there was such a thing as public opinion and public rage threatening to explode, Jose de Venecia in a press conference tried to change tactics, obviously convinced that he could disarm both the people and the opposition with such duplicity as his challenge to the Senate to accept the House of Representatives' "offer" to support a constitutional convention, otherwise he and his allies would proceed with their one-house "constituent" assembly.

But that's not all. After painting themselves into a corner, Juan Miguel Zubiri calls on us to "direct (our) anger from (them) to the Senate." It was so unbelievable it even failed to make you puke.

No wonder the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and presumably their allies, have issued advisories cautioning their nationals about traveling to this country. No wonder the summit had to be called off.

Who would want to attend such an important gathering in a country where the President and the House of Representatives are engaged in such an immoral scheme against the people, something so unprecedented in the experience of democratic governments?

We should have seen it coming. I had always wondered why, during her speech before the House, her allies virtually went wild after she announced that this 13th Congress would undertake the task of amending or changing the Charter. Now we know.

But, she said, we would only contemplate changing the system of government to a parliamentary one after we have made a success of the presidential system. And now, after making a terrible, scandalous mess out of the present system, she is trying to slither out of it and escape culpability by jumping on her so-called train that does not even have tracks to run on.

Well, she also said she would not run. She also said—oh never mind. I need this space.

Of course, whether or not the majority of the people want the Constitution amended, this written covenant between the government and the governed is so important, it has assumed the level of sanctity. No Congress, however powerful its number, no president (especially one of very doubtful mandate) should even think of crafting it in their own image.

It should now be very clear to us who have been apathetic to this remarkable sequence of events since Ms Arroyo took office, that this is a government by Ms Arroyo and her allies, of Ms Arroyo and her allies, for Ms Arroyo and her allies. It is a government against the people.

Ms Arroyo, aside from shamelessly boasting that she is "the best person to lead this country," once said that God Himself put her in office. I couldn't agree more. He did inflict her on us to punish us for dancing the boogie with her and RJ Jacinto at Edsa in 2001, while Fidel Ramos grinned from ear to ear and JDV clapped his hands sore.

I threw out my prized collection of 45 rpms among my college souvenirs—the whole lot of the Riots, the Electromaniacs, etc. and tearlessly said goodbye to "Blue Star." It was the end of the age of innocence.

This is a government that has never allowed us a moment's peace. It is a government that will never allow us the luxury of letting our guard down, while keeping us worried sick over whether we can still put enough food on the table. It is a very stressful government, and its effect on our collective mental health will surely manifest itself shortly, unless we emancipate ourselves from being always on the recovering end of this constant assault on our sense of decency and morality.

We are going through a long, dark, frightening night. However long it is, let us not sleep. *Nessun dorma*. Not until this evil, crafty government of Ms Arroyo has been wiped off the face of this country, or voted out of office, or impeached and exorcised from our consciousness.

Remember the last time we slept soundly after being bored to death by Sen. Francis Pangilinan's one-word samba, "noted"? We woke up to the grim fact that Ms Arroyo had been proclaimed President.

We sleep now, and we wake up being scorched in our own fat.

***

Comments to rubaiyat19@yahoo.com

The Speaker's evacuation

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

PROSPERO PICHAY SAYS THAT IT'S TIME FOR the Senate to demonstrate it's as pea-brained as its congressional counterpart, the House. Alarmed, I suppose, that Senators Ramon Revilla and Lito Lapid have started demonstrating an embryonic capacity for statesmanship, Pichay supports drastic measures to lower the bar once more. "It's not a difficult thing to decide whether there is a need for [constitutional change]," he tells ANC.

Which reminds me of something the great political skeptic H.L. Mencken wrote: "For every problem, there is a solution that is simple, neat and wrong."

The leadership of the House reaped a political whirlwind when its simple, neat and wrong constitutional prescriptions and strategies provoked public denunciation on a nationwide scale. In the face of the right public reaction to the wrong they've been doing, the House leaders decided to compound their errors.

Their railroading was too simple and too neat, and the House leadership was simply too self-satisfied for the citizenry to take it sitting down. The House simply can't appreciate that fact. I was in Bacolod City from Thursday to Friday morning and heard the denunciations in private gatherings, in a forum and from AM commentators and their listeners. The fury crossed party and class lines, including the hitherto uninvolved.

Speaker Jose de Venecia, faced with the President's decision to make a U-turn of her own, tried to "turn the tables" on his critics.

Pichay says his fellow representatives made their Saturday gambit to "defuse tension and divisiveness." He is like an arsonist arguing that if only the fire department didn't insist on stupidly putting out fires, arsonists would eventually run out of things to burn down—and everybody would be happy.

Sad to say, no one seems happy with the House's latest effort to deflect public criticism except, perhaps, Carmen Pedrosa. That's because what the House leadership did was obvious: it did not call for a constitutional convention; it called on the Senate to call for one. and then promised it would call for one too, after the Senate did. Which is a whole lot of ifs that mean nothing since the Speaker's call to the Senate was accompanied by a threat: if the Senate didn't do what he said, he would proceed with his original plan anyway.

But so low has the Speaker's credibility sunk, that even Pedrosa couldn't find it within herself to say that the Speaker really meant what he said. In her Sunday column, she wrote, "After 48 hours, some say 72 hours, then the House will continue with its constituent assembly." But it was the Speaker who said he was giving the Senate 72 hours: so if Pedrosa says the real deadline is 48 hours, does it mean the Speaker didn't mean what he said? Or that the Speaker, out of desperation, simply deviated from the game plan in the hope of bamboozling the Senate, or has Pedrosa helpfully stated the true party position?

So forgive me if I was left unmoved by the sight of Pedrosa shrieking "Respect your representatives!" while Victor Agustin tried to hose down RC Constantino with the contents of a water glass.

What was—is—there to respect? A shriek and a splash won't turn the Speaker into a statesman, and Rep. Luis Villafuerte (who bellowed at Constantino that he shouldn't dare make statements, only swallow them) into anything more than what Rep. Douglas Cagas already is; or inspire sympathy for a practically weepy Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri.

Mencken again comes to mind: "The only cure for contempt is counter-contempt." Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. summarized the House's crude attempt at self-preservation: "The height of mental dishonesty and an example of breathtaking mendacity."

Meanwhile, Pagcor decided to rent the Quirino Grandstand for Dec. 15 so that the protest rally to be held there would be postponed to Dec. 17. I wouldn't be surprised if a simulated rally for the Speaker were held. But genuine protests will push through outside Metro Manila on the 15th, with those in Metro Manila following on the 17th, which is as it should be. We have all wanted unity for a long time, and now, we've found it.

Still, some representatives are hurt. Zubiri, for one, stood red-faced and blinking, seemingly on the verge of tears. It would be uncharitable to say that he tried to hold back crocodile tears. I am sure he and others are genuinely amazed at how low their standing is in the eyes of the public. Perhaps, he should reflect on this example of an animal celebrity.

One of the most famous inmates of the Manila Zoo used to be a spitting monkey. A large sign adorned his cage, warning visitors not only of the monkey's tendency to spit at people, but also of the dangers of wandering too close: anyone within the hairy paw's reach was in danger of being manhandled.

I remembered that monkey as I watched the leadership of the House mount their Saturday press conference. They wore the same resentful expression and chest-beating aggression that made that monkey notorious.

But the monkey had every right to hate the world for being a prisoner of circumstance, while the House has no one to blame but itself for being trapped in a situation it created. Christian Monsod of OneVoice always tells me that every politician has the potential to be a statesman. And I agree: but it begins by insisting that a politician doesn't have to be a monkey's uncle.

We are witnessing the dangers of a single-party government and of unicameralism in the House's behavior. All the House has done is beat a strategic retreat. We should bear in mind Churchill's admonition to his countrymen after the British Army was rescued from Dunkirk. "We must be very careful not to assign to this deliverance the attributes of a victory. Wars are not won by evacuations."

The Jesuits' fault?

COMMENTARY

John Nery

IT WAS THE TURN OF THE CLASS OF 1981—THAT IS, MY high school class—to host the university's annual alumni homecoming last Saturday; I could not make it, because of the press of work. Since some of the work involved was not required but volunteered, and much of it involved the practical arts of rhetoric, I suppose I can lay part of the blame at the feet of the Jesuits.

Throughout my formative years at the Ateneo de Manila, an entire generation ago, the dominant educational philosophy revolved around the Ignatian principles of **sapientia et eloquentia**—core values Fr. Ben Nebres has recently updated to mean "solid learning and effective communication," but which we understood, in our growing-up years, in somewhat more mystical terms, as wisdom and eloquence.

Let me be more precise: When I was in high school, the university was in the middle of a great transition, a change in its way of proceeding that mirrored not only the social ferment in the Philippines but also the radical reorientation of the worldwide Jesuit apostolate in education. ("Way of proceeding" is characteristic Ignatian language; like his 19th-century son Gerald Manley Hopkins, the 16th-century founder St. Ignatius had a gift for the specific and evocative phrase.)

We were in senior year when we first read the famous Decree 4 of the 32nd General Congregation, which redefined the mission of the Society of Jesus as "the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement." (We had no choice; it was required reading.) By that time, Decree 4 was five years old, and the speech of modern-day saint Pedro Arrupe that had inspired it (and coined the phrase "man for others") was a sturdy seven years old. Even those of us in high school who were consumed by the academic race or distracted by new discoveries (such as the "softness of women," in a classmate's specific, evocative words) could sense that the Ateneo of old was changing. It was now *sapientia et eloquentia*, but in the service of the faith.

It still is. The school may have grown to include other colleges and to embrace other disciplines in the last 25 years, but at heart it remains a liberal-arts institution; that is to say, the arts and sciences that empower us to become free and to practice the many uses of freedom, summarized in that Latin benediction of *sapientia et eloquentia*, continue to form the core of Ateneo education.

Not many Ateneo graduates end up as journalists but, in my own case, my path to media work can be traced back willy-nilly (more willy than nilly, to appropriate a quote from an English judge) to the years I spent at the Ateneo—and directly to the Ateneo's core curriculum. (In other words, it really is the Jesuits' fault.)

The culture of schools

As a journalist, I am often given the chance to explain the news and the news-making process at various forums, many of which are hosted by educational institutions. This year, perhaps because I was already in a homecoming frame of mind, I took careful note of the schools I found myself speaking in.

I wanted to find out: What makes one school different from another? Or, conversely, what do the best schools have in common with each other? Over time, I realized that the most successful schools were marked by a culture of success; the most distinctive, a culture of distinction; the most socially engaged, a culture of social engagement. In other words, I found that what defines a school's place in its community and in society at large is its dominant culture.

The culture of the Ateneo de Manila a generation ago was unmistakable. It was thoroughly Jesuit, as I thought then and as I can confirm now. The question is: What made it so? It certainly couldn't have been the number of Jesuits serving in the high school, because my class lived in the immediate post-Vatican II age, when thousands left the priesthood and the trenches of basic education were suddenly emptied.

It must have been the culture.

Culture, however, is like a dance: you can't tell it apart from the dancer. In our case, the Jesuit cast of Ateneo culture was given shape by a veritable corps.

There were the Jesuits, of course. In high school, the Jesuit with the most influence (at least for many of us) was Fr. James O'Brien: OB to everyone, and godfather of the first service-oriented program we ever took part in, Tulong Dunong.

There were the teachers: the joyful Ching Chee Kee, the cerebral Gigi de la Cruz, the indefatigable Ruth Posio. But for many of us, the Ignatian spirit of **magis**—literally, more; meaning the pursuit of the greater, the "more excellent," good—came alive most through the teaching and the example of Onofre Pagsanhan, the great Mr. Pagsi. He drew his students' devotion, and taught us to prize learning, to such an extent that we would skip recess and most of lunch to listen to him read, word for word, from works as varied as "Julius Caesar" and "Lost Horizon."

There were our fellow students, some of them prodigiously gifted. Just one example out of hundreds: When we were juniors our class entry in the annual songwriting contest came in second to a song written by an upstart freshman named Manoling Francisco. His entry, written when he was 13, became one of the most-played church songs of the last 25 years: "Hindi Kita Malilimutan."

Then there were the habits of mind that we learned in our corner of the world: a sense of constant competition (but frustrated by an inability to deal with conflict); a sense of easy excellence (but shadowed by an air of entitlement); a sense of practical virtue (but limited by a marked distaste for "dirty" politics). The reality was clear, even to those of us who were only beginning to understand that the dictator's promised "new society" was in fact still the old one, only with new faces. We were children of privilege, sons of tradition. If we had fully understood what was being asked of us then—to become, in the language of the day, agents of change; to take part in the transformation of the tradition we had inherited—we would have been overcome with fear and trembling. Words from the journals St. Ignatius, kept from time to time, come readily to mind now. Sometimes the Masses he said overwhelmed him, and then this stoic warrior would confide in his diary: "Tears. More tears."

Back to the 1980s. At that time, the phrase "ruined for life" was current on campus. Education in the Ateneo, it was said, ruined one for life. It was a typical Jesuit joke: nuanced and direct, ironic and earnest. It was also untrue, at least for our years in the high school. We had not yet learned, among other calamities, how to turn our back on the worldly. It was the years we spent in the Jesuit college (there was only one in 1981) that proved to be our undoing.

John Nery is managing editor of Inquirer Compact. He can be reached at www.newsstand.blogs.com or jnery@inquirer.com.ph

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LETTERS PHILIPPINE DAILY Inquirer

A more urgent matter than changing our Constitution

IT PAINED ME TO SEE THE HOUSE OF Representatives, in the midst of the human suffering and devastation caused by supertyphoon Reming, wasting time and energy and public resources (and losing sleep!) on Charter change as if this country can not live another day without a new constitution. What insensitivity! What callousness!

If our honorable congressmen care for this country which is visited by 21 typhoons a year, they should now find it compelling—after the Milenyo and Reming tragedies—to initiate legislation enhancing the country's capacity for disaster response and mitigation—something Congress should have done years ago.

The measures should include setting up a national agency that is primarily accountable—and adequately funded and equipped—for disaster response planning and execution; and specifically mandated to establish and maintain a network of emergency supply depots in strategic locations in the country, ready to be tapped in case of emergency.

Our existing ad hoc arrangement, where the most visible "response" organization is nothing more than a coordinating body, is pathetic. The National Disaster Coordinating Council, despite the competence and dedication of those who man it, is hardly equal to the need for an organized and systematic response to the regular occurrence of natural calamities in the country. It has no clear authority to direct the efforts and resources of the various government agencies that participate in disaster response. It has no responsibility either for the failure or inadequacy of government's response to disasters. We need a stronger and properly empowered line agency.

Before the next typhoon comes to bring more misery to our benighted country, I appeal to Congress and the executive branch to put Cha-cha in the back burner, and to focus instead on the urgent task of operationalizing and institutionalizing a national disaster response and mitigation system. Let us aim for zero-casualty with preparedness.

If our honorable congressmen can work overtime, beyond midnight, through the wee hours of early morning, up to sunrise, just to change the House rules to be able to railroad a Senate-less constituent assembly resolution, surely they can work overtime, beyond midnight tomorrow night to railroad a national disaster response bill!

—COL. LEONARDO O. ODOÑO (ret.),
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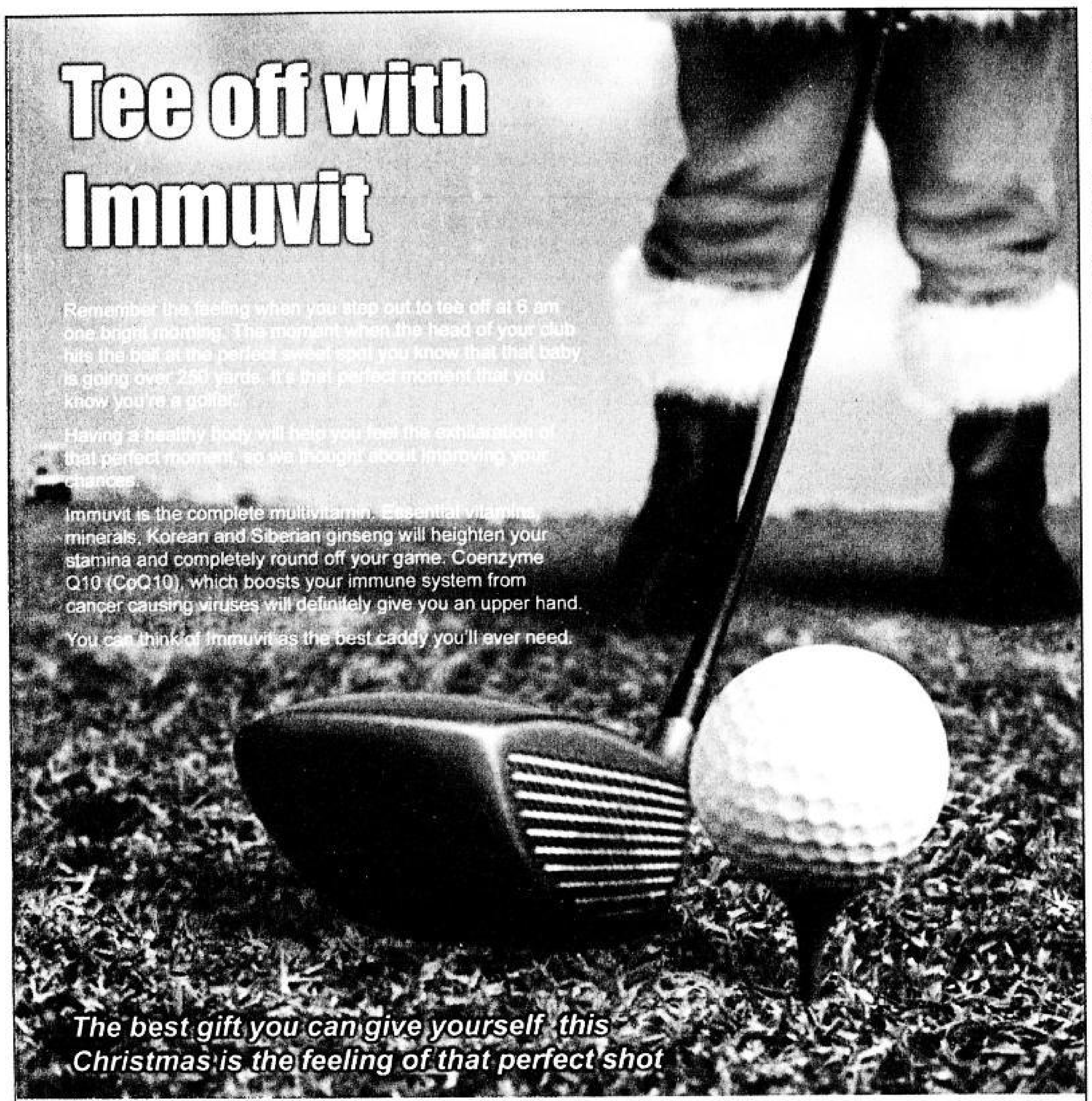
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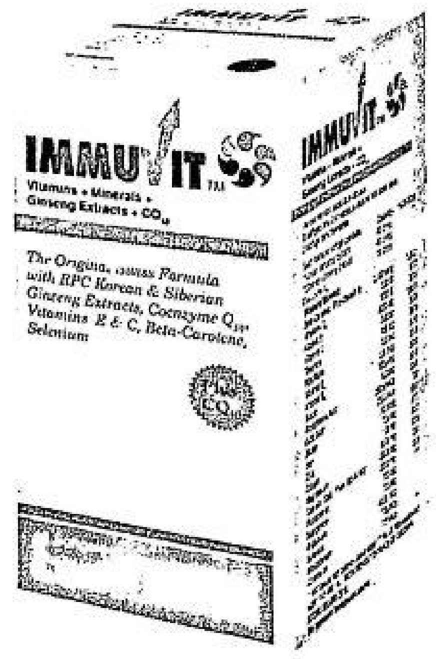
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Editorial should have discussed issue, not 'colorful language'

THIS REFERS TO THE INQUIRER'S Dec. 7 editorial titled "Company of idiots."

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago has always been transparent, honest and straightforward with the public; and yes, she has this habit of calling a spade a spade. She has never been hesitant about expressing her thoughts on her nomination for chief justice of the Supreme Court. In several media interviews, she said up-front that although her term as senator will end in 2010, she will consider the position of chief justice if President Macapagal-Arroyo appoints her. And yes, she said that during the scheduled Judicial and Bar Council public interview, she was cross-eyed and dizzy after preparing all night for the "job interview." But that is because the process of selecting our Supreme Court chief justice deserves utmost care and attention.

As a lawyer, a former Regional Trial Court judge, and a public officer, Santiago knows that the judiciary and the chief justice play crucial roles in a fairly young democracy. Thus, transparency, fair play and fidelity to the rule of law should be paramount in the conduct of the nomination process.

Alas, she was the only nominee who upheld the authority of the JBC. She was the only one who took the public interview seriously. The other "job applicants" refused to heed the call for the public interview, depriving the council of an opportunity to conduct the personal interview of each candidate. What was more appalling was that the JBC, a constitutional body, was cowed by the sentiments of these individual applicants.

The JBC orchestrated an elaborate front, promoting the process as fair and by-the-book; yet, the only job applicant who took the trouble of showing up for the interview was disenfranchised. That was despicable.

Thus, in her privilege speech, Santiago denounced the failure of the nomination process as conducted by the JBC. The senator stood up to let the world know the magnitude of what happened; of how a procedure of national importance was conducted in palpable bad faith.

The INQUIRER would have done a greater service to its readers had it tackled the issue more comprehensively and intelligently instead of sensationalizing the senator's colorful language.

—CAMILLE L. SEVILLA,
chief of staff,
Office of Sen. Miriam
Defensor-Santiago, Room 518,
Senate of the Philippines,
Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City

Arrogant caterer in the 'pork' incident

WHILE I DON'T CONDONE LANAO del Sur Rep. Faysah Dumarpa's physical attack on a hapless waitress, I'd still blame the latter for her oversight, to say the least. The congresswoman had asked her repeatedly if there was pork in the noodles, and she assured her there was none.

When I was teaching at the Mindanao State University, I had a group of three boys who were the workhorses in my class. One was a Jehovah's Witness, the other, a Muslim and the third, a Catholic. They called themselves Jecamus.

Whenever we had to eat outside, all of us would see to it that the food we ordered could be eaten by all of us. I am a Catholic. That is how much we respected each other's religious differences.

However, in this case, the caterer, instead of correcting the situation and assuring that the incident won't happen again, rescinded its contract with the House of Representatives because the feeling of its employees was more important. What a show of arrogance!

—FLOR S. TEMPLE,
Lower Jasaan,
Jasaan, Misamis Oriental

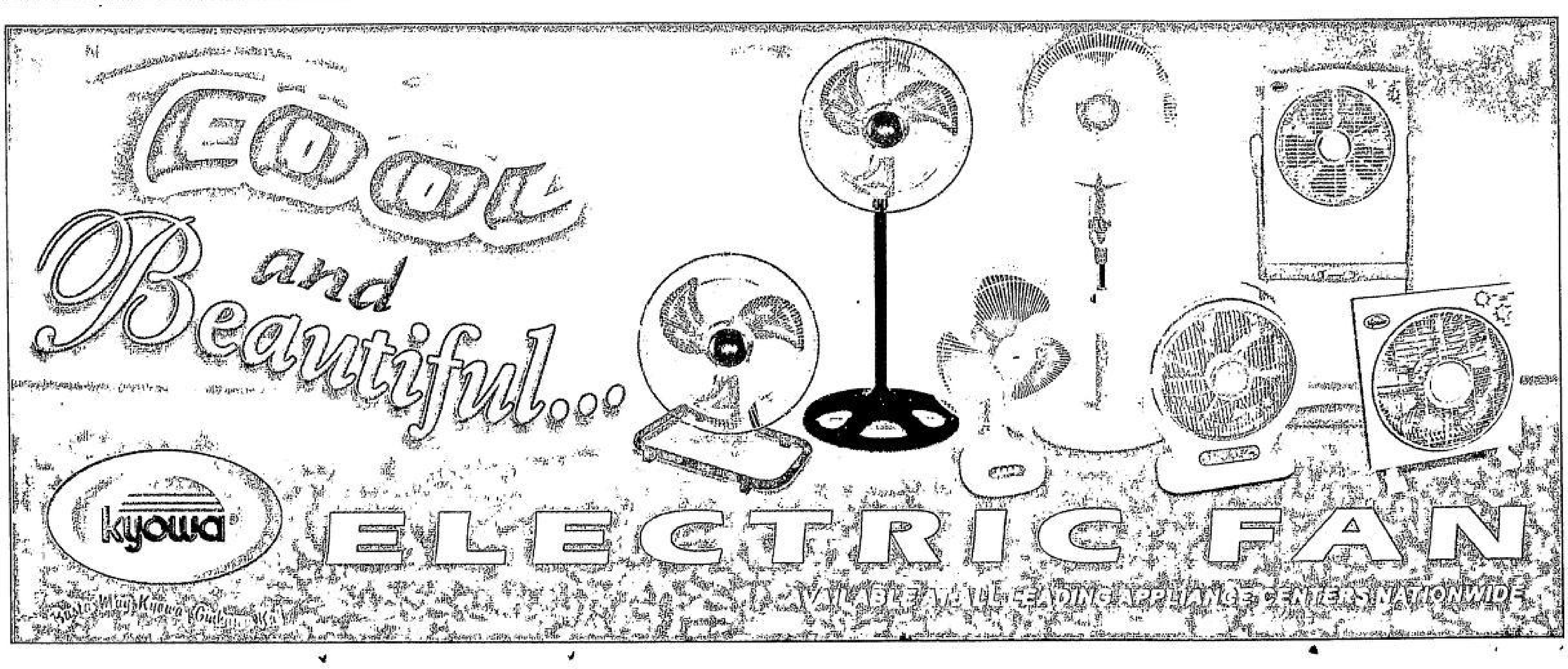
Feudal mind protecting old rich

IN HIS COLUMN TITLED "REwarding disloyalty," (PDI, 12/03/06) Isagani Cruz was saying that Filipinos who did well abroad, but who would have been a mendicant lot in the Philippines, should not be allowed to (1) own real property in the country; (2) buy a *sari-sari* store; (3) start a communications firm. His logic simply wants to protect the old landed rich who continue to ride on the back of 90 percent of Filipinos.

We keep on saying that we have to help ourselves, and now there are *kababayans* who are willing to help the country, risk their retirement money and even spend their twilight years in the country. Cruz, in his feudal mentality, thinks that Filipinos who have left the country are some vassals who have betrayed their country and, therefore, have lost their right to come back.

Well, I guess that's why I voted with my feet.

—BOMBET ARANGOTE,
210-210 Steeles Avenue,
West Toronto Canada



'Seniang' leaves 5 dead in Visayas

From page A1

nomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said Seniang would cause cloudiness and some rain in Metro Manila and the Bicol peninsula "but would not warrant class suspension," Lapus said.

Seniang forced nearly 67,000 people to evacuate as officials battled to avoid a second disaster within 10 days. The mass evacuation was intended to avert a repeat of the devastation caused by Reming, which unleashed massive mudslides in Bicol.

In all, 66,700 people were evacuated nationwide ahead of Seniang's onslaught, more than 59,000 of them in Bicol although the typhoon was not expected to hit the region directly.

Marinduque hit again

Seniang also battered Marinduque, sending terrified residents back to evacuation centers, Rep. Edmundo Reyes Jr. said yesterday.

"With the continuous strong rains, past victims of Typhoon Reming rushed back to different evacuation centers and sought shelter. We have a new wave of terrified evacuees," Reyes said.

Seniang made landfall in the town of Guiuan in Eastern Samar at noon Saturday and moved toward the northern part of Tacloban City, southern part of Samar and into Biliran Island in the afternoon, before moving to Bantayan in Cebu late in the evening.

The typhoon maintained its strength as it moved away from the Visayas and slammed into Occidental Mindoro, bringing down power lines on its way out of the country.

It was spotted 90 kilometers northwest of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro as of 5 p.m. yesterday, Pagasa said. San Jose is 250 km south of Manila.

19th weather disturbance

With winds of 120 km per hour near the center and gusts of 150 kph, the typhoon, the 19th weather disturbance to enter the Philippines this year, slammed into Mindoro and the Calamian Group of Islands, where the weather bureau raised Signal No. 3.

Signal No. 2 was hoisted over neighboring Oriental Mindoro and Lubang Island while Signal No. 1 was raised over Romblon, Marinduque, Batangas, Laguna, Cavite, Rizal, Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Zambales, Metro Manila, Aklan, Antique, Northern Palawan and Cuyo Island.

"Seniang is far enough not to affect Cebu city significantly. It is no longer a threat to Eastern and Central Visayas," Pagasa weather branch chief Nathaniel Cruz said yesterday.

Organizers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations 12th summit on Friday postponed the meeting of the region's leaders, set to open today at the newly built Cebu Convention Center supposedly due to the threat of Seniang. *(Story on Page A1.)*

Enhanced northeastern monsoon

Moving west northwest at 17 kph, Seniang is expected to be 390 km northwest of Coron, Palawan, this afternoon and over the South China Sea and out of the Philippine area of responsibility by late afternoon tomorrow.

Citing an enhanced northeastern monsoon, Pagasa warned fishing boats and small seacraft not to venture out in the next few days because sea conditions would continue to be rough with waves reaching six meters.

"This disturbance will continue to enhance the northeast monsoon which will bring moderate to heavy rains with occasional gusty winds over Luzon," Pagasa said in its latest weather bulletin.

Trapped

In Roxas City, three people were believed trapped inside a small interisland ferry that capsized due to strong winds at the Culasi port, according to the local Coast Guard.

On Boracay Island, strong winds whipped by Seniang toppled electric posts, coconut trees and damaged houses and resorts.

Power supply was lost starting 9 p.m. Saturday and most resorts that were teeming with tourists for the holiday season were being powered by generators, said Jose Rupe Pangonon of the Boracay Special Tourist Police Office.

Trips by ferryboats between the mainland and Boracay have been suspended.

Capiz police reported that year-old Angeline Besana, of Bago, Barangay Chiquito, Panay, died when their house was hit by a fallen tree shortly before 1 a.m. on Sunday.

Her mother was seriously injured and is now confined at a hospital in Iloilo City, police said. Also killed were Pacquito Rectó, Delly Adremesin and Delly's son Jonard, all of San Fernando, Romblon, according to reports reaching police.

Pinned by tree

The Tacloban police reported that 4-year-old April Felicen was pinned to death on Saturday by an uprooted tree at their home in Bagacay, a village on the national highway 12 km from the city proper.

Felicen's 6-year-old brother, John Rey, was seriously injured.

Another girl was seriously injured by an uprooted tree that fell on her family's hut in Barangay Cabugnan in Tanauan, Leyte, on late Saturday, according to Mayor Roque Tiu.

Tacloban's disaster coordinating council initially reported that more than 600 families fled to evacuation centers.

Residents in at least two villages in San Francisco town on Panaon Island in Southern Leyte were ordered evacuated on Saturday noon by Gov. Rosette Lerias as these were landslide-prone areas.

A storm surge occurred late Saturday night in Basey town in Samar, but no one was reported hurt.

Some areas in Tacloban, like parts of V&G Better Homes Subdivision and Barangays San Jose and Apitong, remained flooded.

The Leyte II Electric Cooperative (Leyeco II) reported that it might take one to two weeks to repair electric lines. In the city proper alone, more than a dozen wooden poles were toppled.

The cooperative has ordered the withdrawal of its 12-member task force from Albay to help restore power in the province, according to Macel Avestruz of Leyeco II.

National Transmission Corp., which cut its power supply early Saturday afternoon at the height of the typhoon, has not resupplied power yet to the local electric cooperatives in Leyte and Samar.

Telephone lines were also affected by the strong winds.

The National Disaster and Coordinating Council said 8,292 passengers, 80 buses, 126 trucks, 44 light vehicles, 105 small seacraft and 260 "rolling cargo" were stranded in ports of the Bicol region and throughout the three Visayas regions.

Calapan dike breached

In Calapan City, water from Mt. Halcon has breached the dike, flooding Barangays Panggalan, Bucayao and Communalas, according to city administrator Doy Leachon.

The rivers in Naujan, Victoria and Calapan have overflowed.

In Laguna, strong winds and a heavy downpour disrupted power supply in parts of Calamba City, Victoria, Pangil, Mabitac and elsewhere in the province.

Pansol, Calamba City, Victoria and Mabitac also experienced power interruptions.

In his visit to the typhoon ravaged town of Mogpog in Marinduque, Rep. Reyes said he was distressed when he saw homeless young children playing "*bahay-bahayan*" as if nothing tragic had happened.

He said the nipa hut where the children reside was destroyed.

Reyes lamented that the typhoon-ravaged island had been ignored by the national government in its relief operation efforts.

From the planned caravan of 200 trucks of relief goods that will be dispatched from Luneta to areas devastated by Reming, only two trucks carrying 3,000 relief packs will be heading to Marinduque, according to Reyes. The rest will be forwarded to Bicol.

"One percent of the share is far from enough. That number of packs is only good for three days," he said. "That 1-percent share that Marinduque is getting is directly related to the media attention that we are receiving."

Reyes appealed to media to come to the island and help them tell the world stories of gloom and despair. *With reports from Alcuin Papa in Manila; Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Romulo O. Ponte and Madonna T. Virola, Inquirer Southern Luzon; and Felipe Celino, Nestor Burgos, Vicente S. Labro, Jani Arnaiz, Joey Gabieta and Jhunnex Napallacan, Inquirer Visayas*

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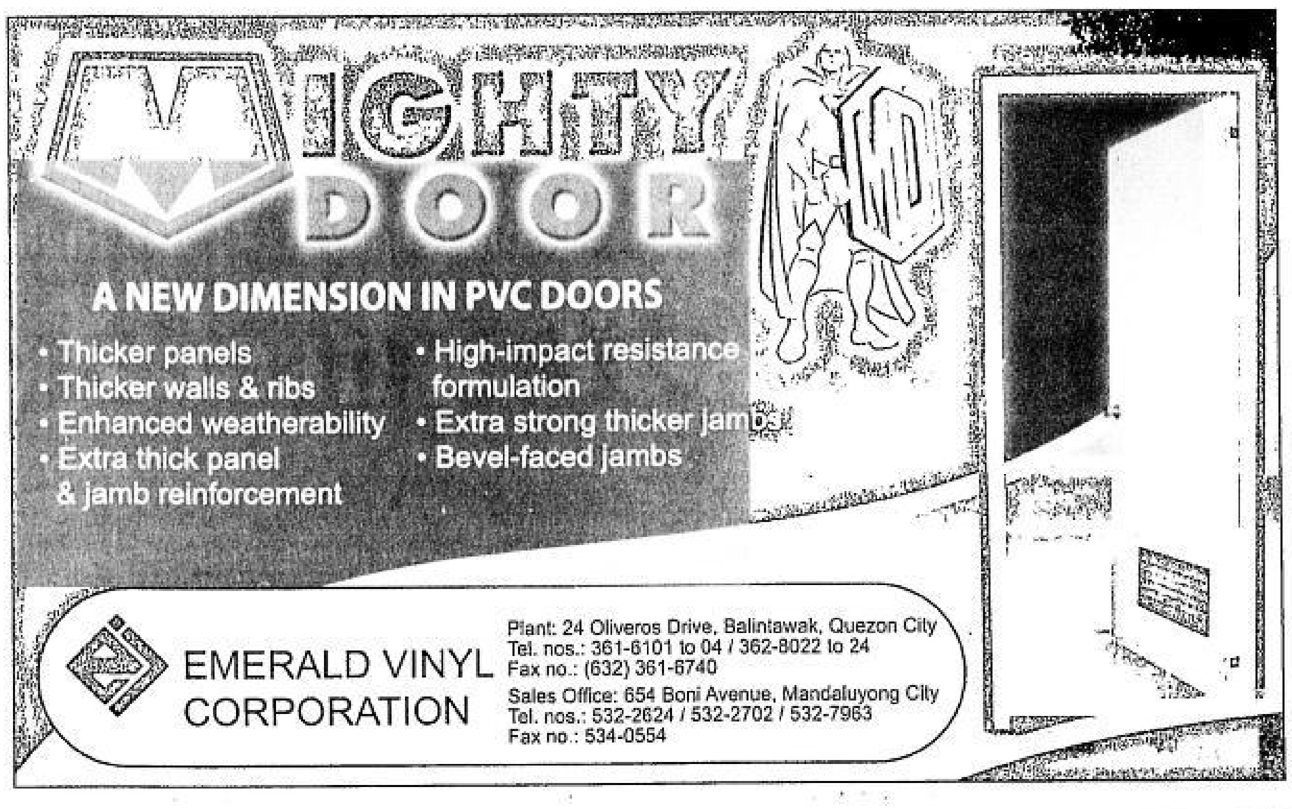

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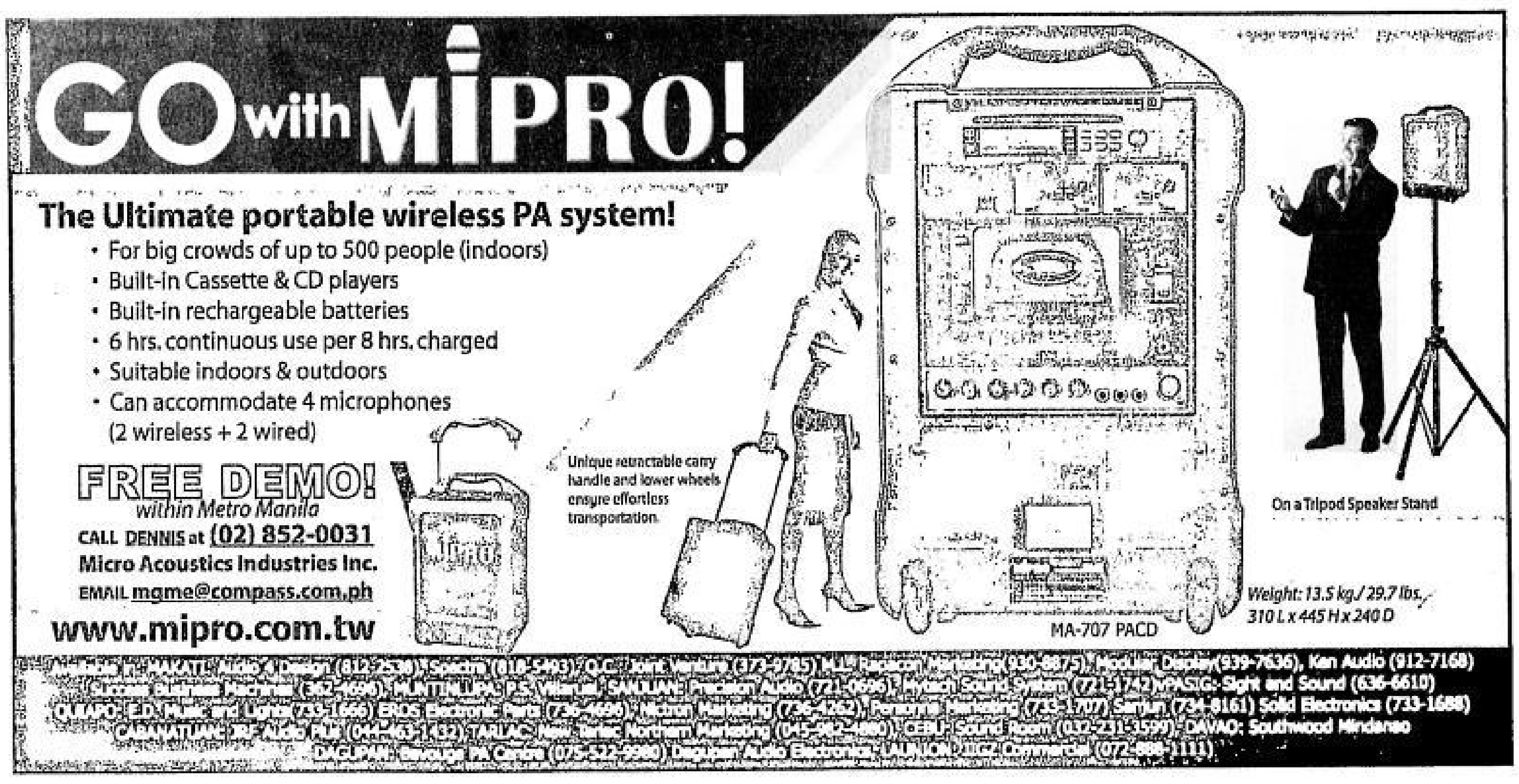

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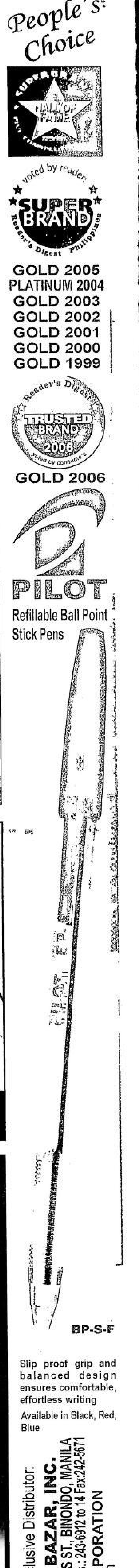

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INC warned GMA of public outrage

From page A1

want to be identified for lack of clearance to speak about it.

The source said that the INC leaders had sought the meeting with the President and that it was held outside Malacañang.

.INC leader Erańo "Ka Erdie" Manalo was not present, the source said.

Asked how Ms Arroyo responded to the INC's concerns, the source said the President told the INC leaders that it would be better if the House leadership itself spoke about how it would address the matter.

By the time Ms Arroyo met with the INC group, she had already been informed that the House leaders had held a caucus that afternoon to determine the actions they would take in view of mounting public anger against Con-ass.

"I don't want to grandstand at the expense of my allies," Ms Arroyo told the INC officials, according to the source.

Asked whether the President spoke with her House allies after her meeting with the INC, the source could only guess that she did and that she had relayed the INC message to them.

Backing for Con-con

Asked if the meeting with INC played a role in the House decision to put off Con-ass and call for a Con-con, the source said that "in fairness" to Ms Arroyo's allies, the De Venecia group had already made up their minds to call for a Con-con.

The source said Ms Arroyo's House allies were aware of her meeting with INC officials.

Also yesterday, Malacañang said it was backing the House call for a Con-con but stressed that Ms Arroyo had neither ordered nor influenced the latest House move.

Palace officials said they saw no reason why people would not rally behind the Con-con plan considering that several sectors, including the Church and the political opposition, had always expressed preference for this mode to revise the Constitution.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye stressed that Charter change would remain to be part of the Arroyo administration's "permanent agenda."

Ermita denial

In his newspaper column, Bunye said the administration would pursue Charter change "because it is the right thing to do ... as this will do away with a degenerated (political) system."

"But this is something that can be done in the proper season, and in an atmosphere of sobriety, unity and democratic statesmanship," Bunye said. "Let the animosity and belligerency first quiet down."

An irked Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita denied reports quoting him as saying that the President had given instructions for her House allies to drop their Con-ass plan.

No order from GMA

"Who is the President to order it in the first place?" Ermita said.

In a phone interview, Ermita said he and the President had not talked about the House bid to pursue Con-con.

He reiterated that Ms Arroyo supported whatever mode was allowed in the Constitution for amending the Charter.

Ms Arroyo's political adviser Gabriel Claudio denied that he got instructions from her to tell her House allies to drop Con-ass.

"There is no such instruction," Claudio said in a separate phone interview.

He said that when House leaders and members informed him about their offer to call for a Con-con, he informed the President of it and she accepted this decision "because this is consistent with her position.'"

Not in disarray

"For the record, the President never interfered with nor influenced the decision of the House to offer Con-con as an alternative to Con-ass," Claudio also said. "There were no orders or pressure from Malacañang."

"The President has always been firm and consistent with her support for Charter reforms and need to shift to a unicameral parliamentary system, but made it clear during her caucuses with House members that she would leave to Congress the methods and processes achieving that goal," Claudio said.

He also denied that the Cabinet was in disarray over the House Con-ass campaign.

"It's not as if this (Con-ass) is being taken up in the Cabinet," Claudio said.

But he stressed that members of the Cabinet "share and support the same advocacy for Charter reforms."

"Whatever differences of opinion there may have been on the manner by which Charter change should be effected are now reconciled by the House move to leave it to a constitutional convention," he said.

"Under the circumstances, I don't see how anybody can be against it," he added.

Ms Arroyo's chief of staff, Michael Defensor, has been vocal about his stand for a Con-con to amend the Constitution. He did not reply to calls from the INQUIRER yesterday.

Claudio also stressed that Malacañang welcomed and supported the move of the House in its move to "open the doors for Con-con."

"We support it. There appears to be a unanimity on this mode," Claudio said.

Bury Con-ass bid, allies urge De Venecia

From page A1

change train was being driven in the House.

"Cha-cha dance is forward-backward, and we already stepped back to accommodate their request for Con-con so that we can dance forward for progress," said Mitra in a phone interview.

Under the Con-ass option, the revision of the Charter will be undertaken by the members of the Senate and the House themselves.

A Con-con, on the other hand, will be made up of elected delegates.

Senators have opposed the Con-ass plan adopted by the House and also dismissed a 72-hour deadline De Venecia set for them to accept the Con-con option.

But Joker is doubtful

Administration Sen. Joker Arroyo yesterday voiced strong doubts that the House leaders were serious when they called for a Con-con, saying they would never leave their political fates to an elected body they might not be able to control.

"If there should be any change, they want their fate decided by themselves, thus, the House addiction to Con-ass," Arroyo said in a statement.

He said Con-con would be "a sovereign body that can do anything, including emasculating, even abolishing the House, which created it."

The maverick senator said a Con-con, once convened, would be a "free body" that could adopt amendments independent of the President and Congress and that it was improbable that congressmen would allow a body they had always loathed to tinker with the Charter.

"It's impossible that the House will agree to a Con-con. The Speaker knows it won't prosper, that's why he's proposing it. If you convene the Con-con, that's already a free body ... They can even abolish the House," Arroyo said separately over radio dzBB.

Since Con-con does not suit their purposes, House leaders will be hard put to persuade congressmen to support any resolution amending the Charter via Con-con, said Arroyo.

"Precisely because of this, the House leadership will not be able to marshal 158 votes, which is two-thirds of the House membership that is needed to call a constitutional convention," he said.

"Charter change is dead," Arroyo said. "To save face, the top House leadership, tongue-in-cheek, made a turnaround. They now call for a constitutional convention which they have always loathed."

In a text message, House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles said the decision whether to formally abandon Con-ass would be made during the majority caucus.

"The caucus will determine if we will push through if the Senate refuses to cooperate. It's an option left to the House leadership," said Nograles.

The lawmaker from Davao City claimed that the House had the authority to convene a Con-ass even without the Senate.

"We approved a resolution for Con-ass [during a marathon session], where we stayed till 6 a.m. Thursday. That's the authority," said Nograles.

The majority has insisted that three-fourths of all the members of Congress, voting jointly, can propose amendments to the Constitution, a position rejected by the Senate which believes that any amendment should be voted upon separately by the two chambers.

Will play it by ear

Surigao del Sur Rep. Robert Ace Barbers, a Lakas-CMD stalwart and one of the prime movers of the Cha-cha drive, said in a phone interview that what the Speaker did was to open the options for constitutional amendments.

Asked whether the House was hell-bent on pursuing a House-only sponsored Con-ass, Barbers said: "We'll play it by ear. We will follow the wisdom of the majority of members of the House. If they say, that's the direction that we will take, then we will do so."

The decision, he said, could be made today at the majority caucus, or after the deadline for Senate action lapses on Thursday.

Opposition plan

In separate phone interviews, House Minority Leader Francis Escudero and one of his deputies, Cibac party-list Rep. Joel Villanueva, said opposition lawmakers would ask the majority in the plenary session today to reconsider the adoption of House Resolution No. 197, which calls on Congress to convert itself into a Con-ass.

"They should clarify their stand and actually withdraw from it already—no conditions and no reservations," said Escudero.

He stressed that a formal action by the plenary was necessary to undo what the people perceived as an "illegal act."

Villanueva appealed to the majority to repeal the resolution.

Sen. Franklin Drilon said the Senate would ignore the 72-hour deadline set by De Venecia.

"No one, including JDV, can give us a deadline. Only the people can give us a deadline," he said.

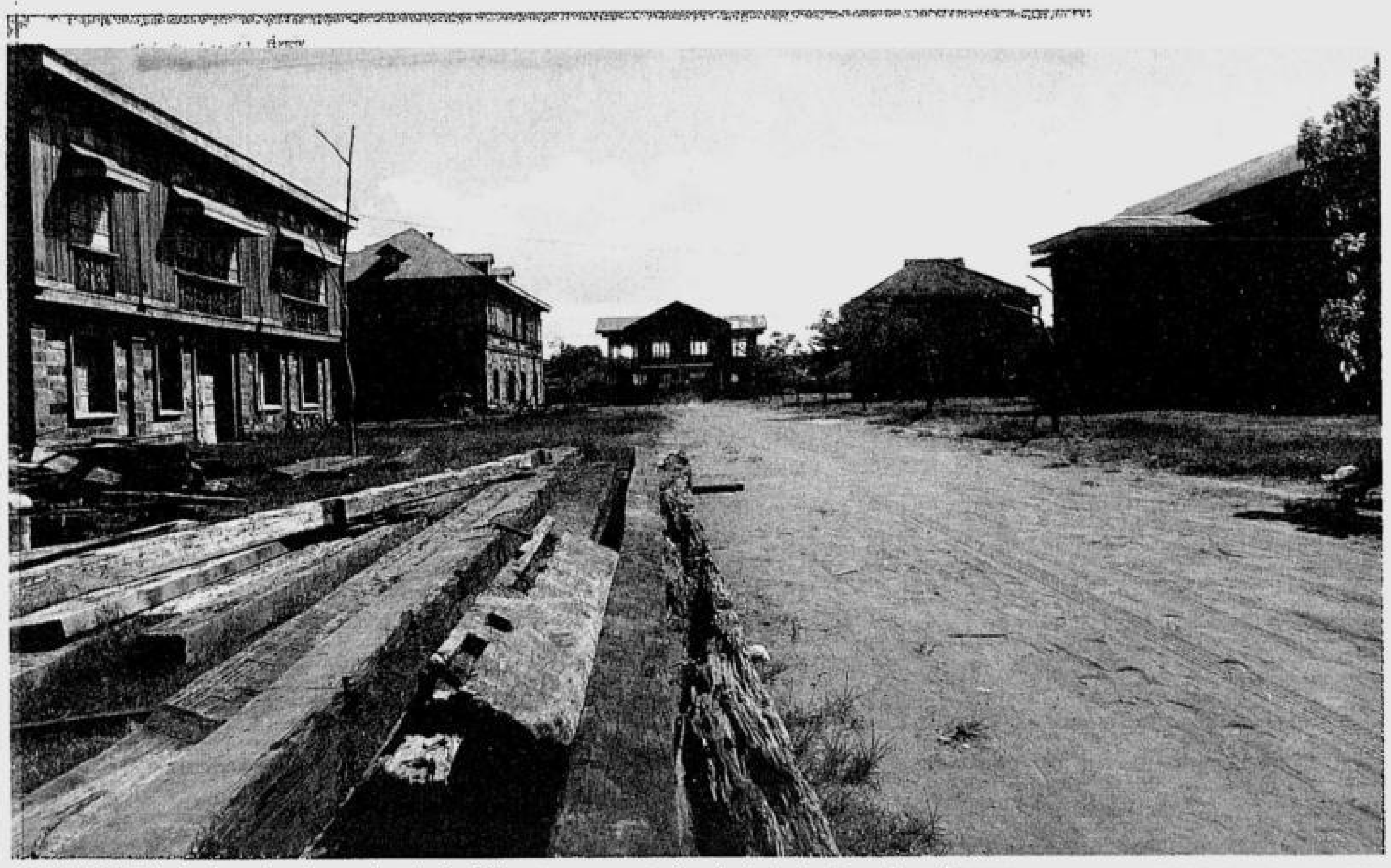
Senate hearings

Senate Pro Tempore Juan Flavier, himself a proponent of Con-con, said: "Why would they dictate to us what to do? With such arrogance, the more that this Con-con will fail."

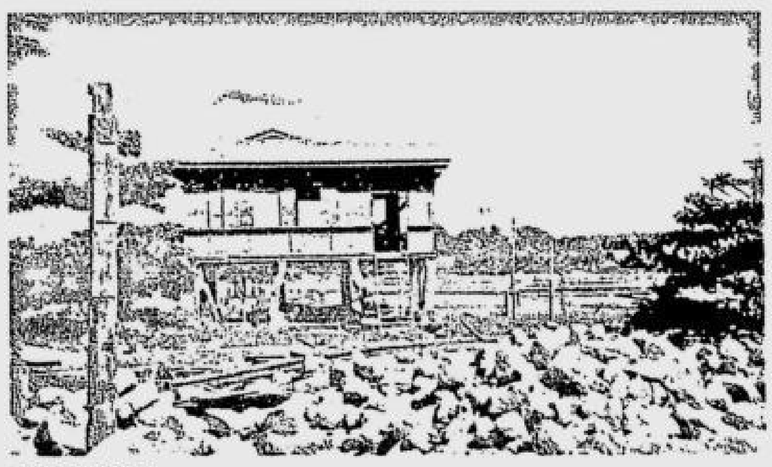
The Senate committee on constitutional amendments resumes its hearings at 10 a.m. today on proposals to amend the Charter through either Con-ass or Con-con.

Invited were, among other people, Fr. Joaquin Bernas, SJ; retired Justice Vicente Mendoza; Archbishop Angel Lagdameo of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines; and El Shaddai leader Mike Velarde.

Arroyo agreed with his colleagues' view that De Venecia's sudden shift from Con-ass to Con-con was a face-saving move.



"CALLE REAL," a heritage housing project in the 50-hectare property of real estate developer Jerry Acuzar. PHOTOS BY TONETTE OREJAS/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON



CAGAYAN House

URRUTIA House

New 'old town' of heritage houses fuels furor

From page A1

were standing on his estate's version of "Calle Real" on Nov. 26 when he allowed the INQUIRER to tour the property.

These houses, Acuzar said, were dismantled from their original sites in various points of Luzon or "rescued" from junk shops, transported, reassembled and restored in their new locations.

Another house, Acuzar's first and which he named "Casa Real," is a mix of parts from several old houses bought from junk shops.

Two historically significant works are in progress, but he asked that these not be named just yet.

Work at the *plazuela* has started. Its centerpiece is an entirely new monument hailing industrious women of olden times. The *plaza mayor* has yet to rise.

Acuzar, a developer of high-end and socialized housing projects, said it took him three years to build the pueblo.

If his resources would allow him, he plans to install a total of 50 old structures on his lot.

He said he planned to put the Pio chapel beside the river that empties into the South China Sea.

"*Ang kulang ko na lang simbahan* (The only thing I lack is a church)," he said, denying that he wanted it for his daughter's debut.

Acuzar said installing a church would complete the features of the old town project, which he calls a "passion."

He said he got interested only in the Pio chapel because a dealer informed him that the heir of the hacienda founder, actress Rosemarie Gil, had converted to another religion and that the chapel was dilapidated. He did not name the dealer.

After asking the INQUIRER about how Pio residents reacted to his plan, he said: "*Hindi ko na gusto* (I don't want it anymore)."

He has yet to send an official communication to Pio residents that he was backing out from the plan and that he would look for another chapel.

Rubi said the Pio PPC would not let down its guard.

"In 1986, when Rosemarie and (actor) Dante Varona tried to take the church bell (dated 1865), the tenants foiled their attempt by chasing them with bolos. That's just a bell. What more a church?" said Rubi, a 55-year-old teacher.

Heritage

Acuzar agreed he touched sensitive nerves because his latest prospect was a chapel, which is a community-owned and shared structure. It has not been the case, he noted, with the ancestral houses.

Ivan Henares, a Pampanga historian and trustee of the Heritage Conservation Society, said whether it was a house or a church or other buildings, the value or function of a structure in the cultural and historical fabric of the community should be respected in the purchase or transfer plan.

In the case of the Pio chapel, the villagers claim it as theirs. They use it when they celebrate Masses every 5 p.m. on Saturdays. Residents also use the chapel for various religious rites and community events.

They assert ownership even as the Gils have retained the four hectares on which the chapel stood.

A source said it was not the Gils who transacted with Acuzar's agent but their caretaker, Jun Pabustan. The latter, however, denied dealing with any buyers.

It puzzled Rubi why this time the actress did not consult them when she did some years back about her plan to convert the chapel for use by Born Again Christians.

The INQUIRER tried to contact the Gil siblings through Pabustan or Rosemarie through a friend in Angeles City. No feedback came in the last three weeks.

Fr. Resty Lumanlan, SVD, a native of this town, said the Pio chapel was "never for sale."

"It should never be sold because since the *frailes* (friars), it has been the property of the Roman Catholic Church, particularly the Archdiocese of San Fernando, Pampanga," he said.

"Much more, it is part of the heritage of the parish of Porac," he said.

The chapel is an architectural heritage, said Henares.

Built in 1861, this is the only intact circular chapel in Pampanga, predating the one regarded as the country's first on the University of the Philippines' Diliman campus in Quezon City.

The remains of the hacienda founder, Don Felino Gil, are interred behind the altar. Gil founded the Don Honorio Ventura College of Arts and Sciences in Bacolor, the oldest vocational school in Southeast Asia. Under the machuca tiles and behind the chapel are at least 100 graves.

Moratorium

Citing Pio's experience, Henares raised the need for those in the heritage conservation community to debate on the ethics of transferring structures—an activity that is fairly new and done on a minimum extent until Acuzar ventured into his large-scale pueblo project in 2004.

. The issue or even Acuzar's pet undertaking was "not at all" tackled in the International Conference on Heritage Houses and Vernacular Architecture held in Tagbilaran City in May, according to painter-writer Claude Tayag, one of the 495 participants.

Tayag said it was the first conference held on that topic. The discussions centered on on-site restoration efforts that flourished largely on private funds over the recent decades, conference papers showed.

Henares suggested that in the debates, discussion points should include the historical significance of the structures, their actual or future functions to the residents and the communities, consultation requirements, protocols, local heritage plans and the local government's position on the issue.

Henares also sought a moratorium on Acuzar's project "until further studies are done on the location in particular and until the heritage community has fully digested this unusual project and threshed out the ethics of transferring heritage structures."

(To be continued tomorrow.)

Metro Cebu hotels offer 'super discounts'

By Jerome Aning

METRO CEBU HOTELS ARE FACING A SEvere shortage of guests as a result of the abrupt postponement of this week's 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit.

Tourism Undersecretary Eduardo Jarque said many hotels, including the five-star, would have a mere 20 to 30 percent occupancy rate in the next two weeks because of booking cancellations by summit participants.

"It's supposed to be peak season in Cebu, but there are some hotels that will be left with so few guests," Jarque said in a phone interview. The affected hotels include Shangri-La Mactan Resort and Spa, Cebu Plantation Bay, Hilton, Marriott, Waterfront, Marco Polo and Maribago.

Even with the travel advisories issued by some governments abroad regarding possible terror attacks in Cebu during the summit, hotels there remained fully booked and no foreign guest cancelled their stay, Jarque said.

But after the government announced it was postponing the summit to next month because of Typhoon "Seniang," the participants packed their bags and left.

Super clean

Jarque said foreign guests taking part in the summit who arrived early were "impressed by what they saw and experienced in Cebu."

"They said Cebu was 'super clean,' and that the people were working together to make their stay hassle-free and become a wonderful experience," he recounted, quoting members of the 200-strong Chinese advance party.

He said Seniang also disrupted tourism traffic in Cebu and Boracay, the country's top two destinations.

The typhoon left Boracay's beaches littered with debris and some resorts made of light materials were damaged. Local residents and even tourists were helping clean up the beach yesterday while the damaged resorts were being reconstructed, Jarque said.

"Seniang caused a skip in our beat but we didn't lose the rhythm; the combined marketing network of the DOT and the private sector is in high gear to maximize tourist arrivals in the remaining weeks of the year," Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano said in a statement.

"Though Seniang disrupted tourism traffic in Cebu and Boracay… we will still achieve a 9 to 10 percent increase in foreign tourist arrivals," he added.

Huge discounts

Jarque, quoting the hotel association in Cebu, said "discounted super rates" would be offered to local and foreign guests who wanted to spend Christmas in Cebu and sample the upgraded facilities and services intended for those coming for the summit.

Cebu City has about 5,900 "top-level" rooms, while Mactan has about 2,600, according to the official.

Jarque said the department had also activated its foreign offices, particularly in its top three nearest markets—China, South Korea and Japan—to contact tour operators and organizer to find guests for Cebu.

Initial target of these "tourist hunt" were those who were wait-listed when Cebu's hotel rooms became fully booked with the approach of the summit.

The contingency plans appear to be gaining some success.

Jarque said Sharon Samarista, Shangri-la communications director, reported that a group of 35 Koreans would be arriving in the hotel next week, with two more groups having their schedules finalized.

Carl Hudson and Efren Belarmino, general managers of Cebu Marriott and Plantation Bay, also reported that reservations for next week were starting to trickle in, he said.

Shangri-La's
Mactan Island Resort & Spa
CEBU PHILIPPINES
asean
12th ASEAN SUMMIT
Caring
Sharing
nunity

PCPO-MALACAÑANG PHOTO

THE HEAVY downpour and strong winds brought about by Typhoon "Seniang" hit Cebu on Saturday, justifying the decision of national organizers to cancel the scheduled Asean summit.

Asean summit reset

From page A1

scheduled to begin today.

On Friday, President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration announced the gathering had been put off because of Typhoon "Seniang" that was plodding toward the country from the Pacific. (*See story on Page A1.*)

Ambassador Marciano Paynor Jr., chair of the summit's national organizing committee (NOC), said in a press briefing here that senior officials of Asean and six other countries from East Asia reached the "consensus" on the new summit dates on Saturday.

Paynor said the new dates would have to be confirmed first by the leaders of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Burma (Myanmar), the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, which comprise Asean, and dialogue partners that include India, New Zealand and Australia.

The final dates would be announced within the week, Paynor said. The biggest complication could be the scheduled Jan. 6-14 trip to Europe of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

'Right decision'

"We still feel that we made the right decision in considering the safety of the delegates," Paynor said, referring to the postponement. While thankful that the typhoon was hardly felt in Metro Cebu, he said the hosts could not afford to put at risk the safety of the heads of state.

Summit spokesperson Victoriano Lecaros said it was fortunate that Cebu was spared and that should not be a cause for regret.

"Let's not be like the guy who bought car insurance and expressed regret that he didn't meet an accident so he could collect on the policy," Lecaros said.

Paynor acknowledged that there would be huge economic losses in Cebu as a result of the deferment. "All of us lost, but this is all part of the reality of life," he said.

The number of meetings and documents to be signed by ministers in the January meeting will almost be cut in half, which means fewer delegates and hotel room requirements, Paynor said.

40 meetings

He said the number of meetings would go down from 95 to about 40 since the Asean eminent persons' group and the economic ministers had concluded their conferences.

Speculations spread that the postponement may have been caused by security issues because several foreign embassies on Thursday issued warnings that a terror attack was possible.

The Associated Press reported that a Philippine security official said that the terror warnings, planned antigovernment protests in Manila and fresh coup rumors may have influenced Ms Arroyo's decision to defer the meetings.

The typhoon was "a lame alibi" amid the political unrest that had been brewing due to opposition by many groups against a government-endorsed plan to amend the Constitution, he said, according to AP.

Best dry run

Under the proposed new schedule, foreign ministers would hold two days of consultations before the leaders arrive on Jan. 10, followed by the Asean summit the next day. Asean would meet with China, Japan and South Korea on Jan. 12, with the East Asia summit on the 13th.

"This is one of the best dry runs we've ever had," Paynor said in jest. "Although the attendant quid pro quo for that is our anguish, and our feeling of extreme disappointment."

The Philippines had rushed to get ready to host the meeting—building a new convention center from scratch that was still getting the final touches as preliminary meetings started—after Burma pulled out as host eight months ago amid criticism over its human rights record. *With reports from AP; Wilfredo Rodolfo III, Cebu Daily News, and Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao*

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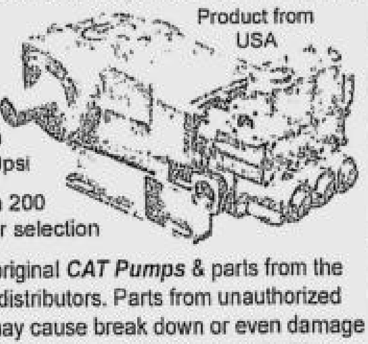
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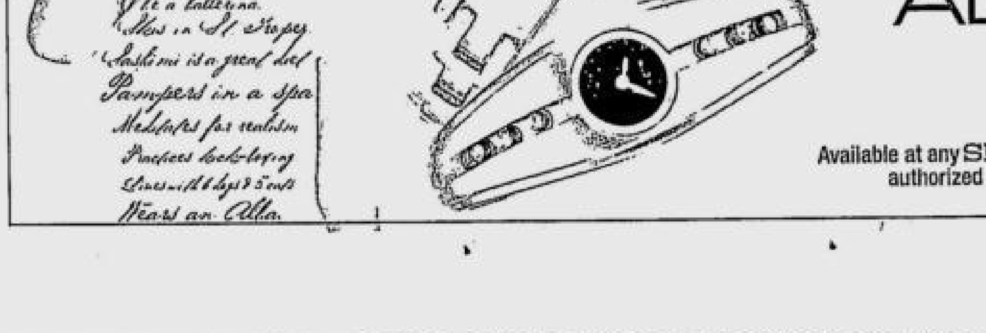

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Catanduanes rehabilitation under way

THOUSANDS of coconut trees were damaged by Typhoon Reming that passed Catanduanes on **Nov. 30.** DOMINIQUE TABORA/CONTRIBUTOR

By Fernan Gianan
Inquirer Southern Luzon

VIRAC, CATANDUANES—FIVE DAYS AFTER SUPERTYPHOON "Reming" raked the southern towns of Catanduanes for five hours on Nov. 30, the ravaged residential areas resembled a war zone at night as thick smoke rose from burning debris.

The Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council tallied 12 persons dead, including five from this capital town, and more than 100.

The provincial board immediately declared a state of calamity over the whole province on Dec. 1 and authorized the release of P9.6 million in calamity funds.

Gov. Leandro Verceles Jr. instructed the Provincial Health Office to make an urgent request addressed to President Macapagal-Arroyo and the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office for the rehabilitation of the Eastern Bicol Medical Center.

Reming's winds blew the roofs off the outpatient department and two other hospital buildings and smashed the windows of all wards. The operating room was rendered useless as water damaged sensitive equipment.

There was also no water supply. The Bureau of Fire Protection fire truck now delivers water to the hospital.

Rep. Joseph Santiago lent a small generator for use in the emergency room.

Damage to the entire hospital could amount to at least P30 million, according to provincial health officer Dr. Rico Lareza.

Lareza appealed for supplies of antitetanus shots, fluids, injectables, needles, gauze, cotton and other items.

Infrastructure damage

The Department of Public Works and Highways reported that the contractor of the Catanduanes Circumferential Road Improvement Project had pledged to work with the DPWH and the San Miguel municipal government in removing landslides that buried sections of the national road to Viga town. The roads to Viga and Baras towns remained impassable as of Dec. 1.

The Virac Water District (Viwad) expected Barangays Cavinitan and Calatagan, as well as portions of the upland villages it services, to remain waterless for more than a month.

Viwad general manager Virgilio Arcilla said, it might be longer if the transmission pipes at the Cauayan source had been washed out. He said water service had been restored to half of the poblacion.

The intake tank at the Padurog source, he added, had been buried by mud and silt and could take a week to restore.

Damage to infrastructure and other property, including the power grid, has been pegged at P370.8 million.

The Department of Education has yet to estimate the cost of rehabilitating damaged school buildings. At the Virac Pilot Elementary School alone, 90 percent of its buildings were damaged.

Seven buildings of the Catanduanes National High School had been destroyed.

The DepEd listed 47 destroyed buildings in seven other schools.

Homes

The PDCC report did not include cost of rehabilitating residential areas. Homeowners have started repair work without waiting for government assistance.

According to the PDCC, the supply of flour and construction materials was already critical. GI sheets for roofing have remained stuck at the Tabaco Port for lack of ferry boats. Operators of the two shipping companies plying the Tabaco-Catanduanes route have suggested the use of the Sabang Partido Port in Camarines Sur as an alternate route to the mainland.

Overland travel from Catanduanes to Manila has remained impossible. Massive mud flows, fallen power posts and washed-out bridges hinder transportation from Legazpi to Tabaco, as well as the Sabloyon route.

Those taking RSL Bus Line's daily trips to Manila have to walk for four hours from Tabaco to Legazpi.

Communication lines are down, and the only means of contacting the mainland is through the VHF radios of the provincial government, police and the Air Transport Office.

Some Globe cell phone users travel to Viga to take advantage of the signal there while Smart users await technicians to restore the Mt. Cagmasusu, Lictin tower.

All the banks have shut down on-line oper-

CATANDUANES/ A21

IN THE KNOW

Reming's toll on Catanduanes

- 7,501 houses totally damaged; 12,574 houses partially damaged.
- In Virac and in Bato, about 90 percent of buildings damaged
- In San Andres, an estimated 60-70 percent of the houses damaged.
- Displaced persons: 78,262 persons (18,870 families).
- Heavy damage in schools in 5 towns
- Damage to agriculture, P18 million
- Damage to public infrastructure and properties, including the province's power grid: P370.8 million (initial estimate).

Fernan Gianan

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Classes, offices in Metro Cebu resume today

By Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—LOCAL GOVERNMENT and education officials in Metro Cebu have decided to set aside the 4-day holiday on Dec. 11-14 and ordered the resumption of work in government offices and of classes in all levels.

With the postponement of the 12th Association of Asian Nations (Asean) Summit, classes in public and private schools will resume today even if Malacañang has not lifted the four-day holiday for government sectors and schools in Cebu, Mandaue and Lapulapu cities.

The four-day holiday was meant to ease traffic and allow officials to concentrate on securing the delegates to the Asean Summit that was set here from Dec. 10 to 14.

President Macapagal-Arroyo and the 12th Asean Summit National Organizing Committee decided to postpone the conference due to Typhoon Seniang that affected many parts of the Visayas since Friday until yesterday, although it was not felt much in summit venues Cebu, Mandaue and Mactan Island.

Department of Education regional director Carolino Mordeno said he issued a memorandum to the school divisions of Mandaue, Cebu and Lapulapu yesterday for the resumption of classes in the elementary and secondary levels.

Most of the universities and colleges have also announced the resumption of classes today, except for the University of the Philippines-Cebu and the Cebu Normal University that decided to continue with the school holiday since it was too late to call back students who already left for their provinces.

Other private schools decided to resume classes on Tuesday to give time to student from another provinces to return to Cebu.

Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña has also instructed all employees of the Cebu city government to return to work today.

2.5 million truckloads of volcanic debris loosened by 'Reming,' says volcanologist

LEGAZPI CITY—AN ESTIMATED 10 million cubic meters or around 2.5 million truckloads of volcanic debris were loosened by Supertyphoon "Reming," a volcanologist yesterday said.

The loosened debris caused lahar flows on high risk areas around Mayon volcano and buried homes that left more than 1,200 villagers, listed as dead or missing.

Ed Laguerta, senior science research specialist of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology-Bicol (Phivolcs-Bicol), said two teams of geologists started measuring the amount of volcanic debris along the three main river channels that merge along the Yawa River and lead into the Albay gulf.

The geologists conducted an aerial survey and took photos of the areas covered by the lahar and were about to measure the thickness of the debris deposits through ground routing.

"It will take a week or two to complete all these procedures and the 10 million cubic meters could still increase," Laguerta said.

He added that the results of the measurement will serve as significant inputs to disaster officials studying the permanent relocation of residents living in lahar-prone areas.

It will also benefit the Department of Public Works and Highways if it would plan to create dikes or do other engineering intervention.

Laguerta said the people residing near river channels should be prioritized in the relocation although, ideally, all those in lahar-prone areas should be relocated as far as "total safety" is concerned.

He said Phivolcs would also be comparing river channels before and after the lahar to determine significant changes in its future paths.

After studying the present lahar flow, Phivolcs will also measure how many "collapsible materials" are left on the slopes, which could possibly turn into lahar when loosened by a heavy volume of rainfall.

Laguerta explained that the recent "quiet eruption" of Mt. Mayon served to prevent rather than trigger the lahar that encroached on low-lying areas at the height of "Reming" on Nov. 30.

During the latest eruption, an estimated 80 million cubic meters of lava or hardened magma was ejected from the crater, Phivolcs records showed.

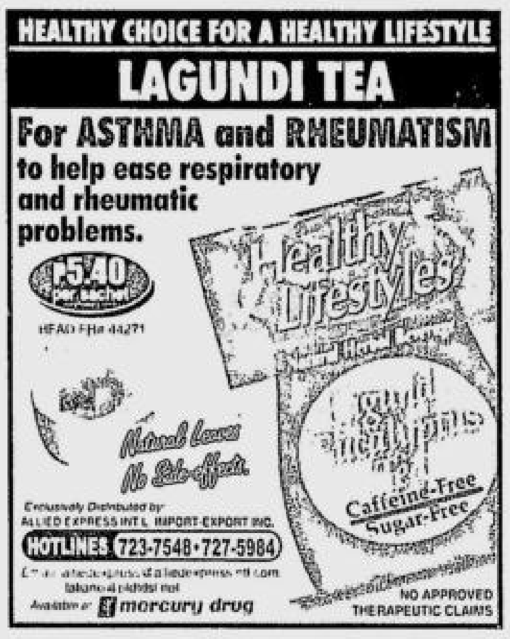
"The lava flow is hardened magma, which could not be loosened by water. It actually blocked quite a good quantity of lahar that could have added to those which buried houses at the low-lying areas during "Reming," he said.

Lahar consists of a sufficient volume of rainfall mixed with sand, boulders and ash that were shed off from the main chunks of lava during the eruption.

He said the speed of lahar varies depending on the topography and the composition of debris and amount of rainfall.

"Lahar also does not have barriers. It will keep flowing for as long as there are low-lying areas to encroach on. The end point of lahar would turn out to be the foot of mountainous slopes," he said.

"Lahar flow from the foot of Mt. Mayon at the height of 'Reming' was the first such experience in the history of Albay, preceded perhaps in terms of destruction only by the 1814 eruption that buried Cagsawa Church in Daraga, Albay," observed Laguerta. *Ephraim Aguilar, Inquirer Southern Luzon*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Catanduanes . . .

From page A20

ations, with the Equitable PCIBank forced to close after the typhoon tore off its roof and water damaged all equipment.

Relief goods

The distribution of relief goods by local government units and other agencies began in earnest on Dec. 1, with three C130 planes of the Philippine Air Force landing the next day to deliver more goods.

Municipal administrator Virgilio Candelaria said they distributed relief packs, consisting of noodles and canned sardines, even without rice as hunger had already set in among the victims.

In San Andres, Mayor Aly Romano, assisted by former Mayor and businessman Joseph Cua, also began doling out food packs to victims. Rep. Joseph Santiago also formed his own relief distribution team bound for heavily affected barangays of Virac.

The release of rice from the National Food Authority was delayed due to the damage on its warehouse in San Isidro Village. About half of the 40,000 sacks in stock were damaged by rain and would have to be considered unfit for human consumption. It also took some time for NFA workers to sort the still dry rice from the wet ones. The remaining 20,000 sacks, the NFA said, was still good for the consumption of the province for at least 30 days.

The Philippine National Red Cross in Catanduanes also began repacking goods for eventual distribution, despite the heavy damage sustained by the chapter headquarters. It is now temporarily operating out of the audio-visual room of the Catanduanes College.

PNRC national chairman and Sen. Richard Gordon arrived from Legaspi City on Dec. 1 promised to facilitate the repair of the PNRC headquarters.

The Diocese of Virac Social Action Foundation Inc. (DVSAFI) has issued an urgent appeal for assistance from the national and international communities for speedy relief and rehabilitation efforts.

The DSAFI launched "Tabang Catanduanes," which seeks to gather donations for the relief operation as well as for the rehabilitation of shelters of residents who have lost their homes during Reming's passage.

Rev. Fr. Laudemer Jose Gapaz said civic-minded residents and entities may contact DVSAFI through his e-mail address: ljgap@yahoo.com.

ROUNDUP

P20M for Isabela city workers

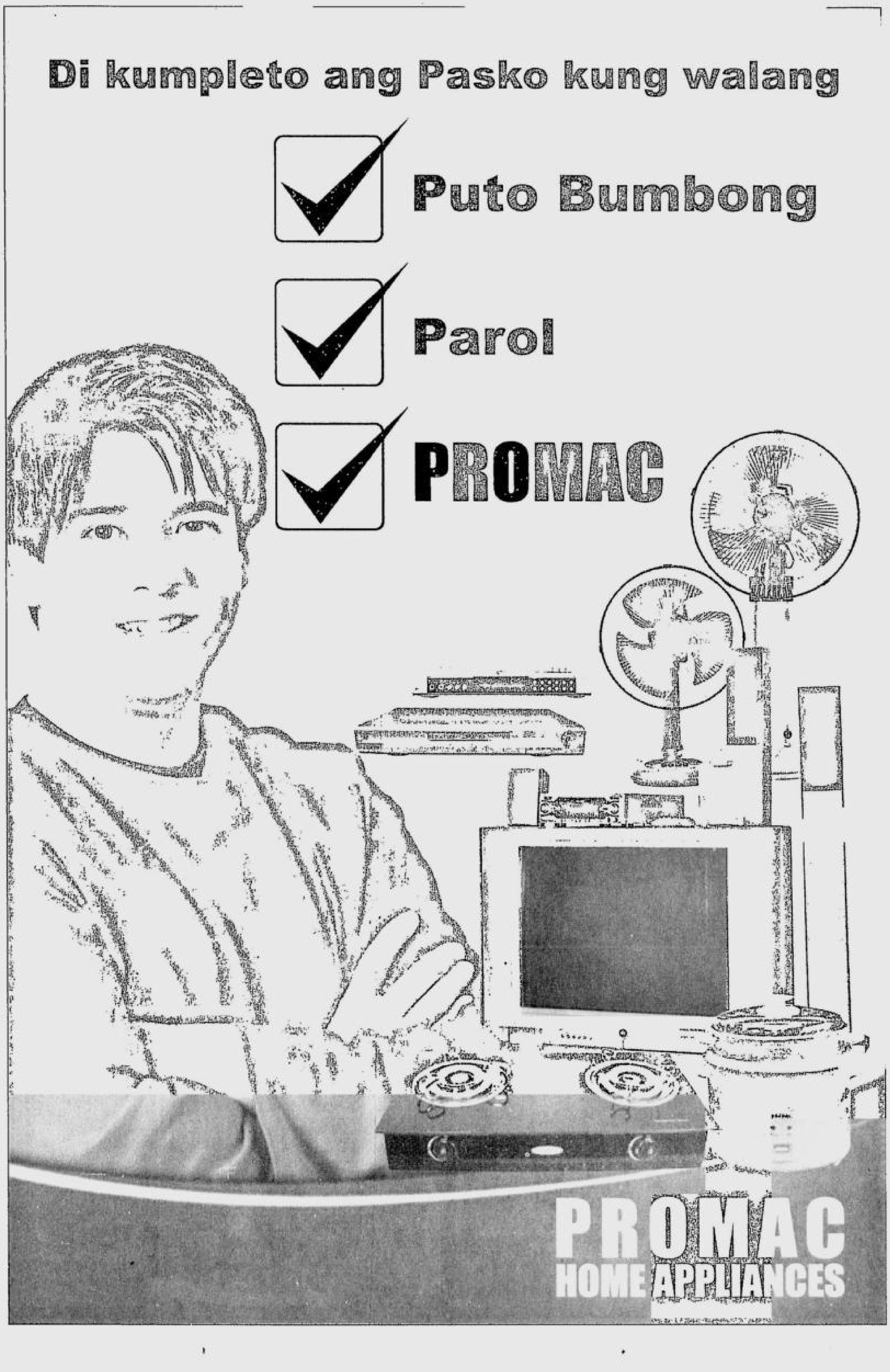
SANTIAGO CITY—The city government has set aside at least P20 million to pay the yearend benefits of about 700 city employees and barangay health and social workers to help them recover from the effects of recent typhoons that hit the province. Mayor Amelita Navarro said the benefits would be given a week before Christmas to help the employees, many of whom suffered from the effects typhoons "Paeng" and "Queenie." City employees are assured to receive 13th-month pay, 14th-month pay and a cash gift, Navarro said. Aside from these benefits, the city's 70 barangay health and social workers will receive P3,000 each, she said. ***Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon***

Village urge military stay

MAGSAYSAY, Davao del Sur—The barangay council of Malawanit here has passed a resolution urging the military to retain the 66th Infantry Battalion, which would be reassigned to other areas. Malawanit councilor Pablo Caballero said they were wary that New People's Army (NPA) rebels would take advantage of the removal of the unit and establish its base anew in the village. Malawanit is one of the areas that the rebels have frequented in the past. He said they will also initiate a signature drive aimed at convincing the military hierarchy on the importance of retaining the said unit. The INQUIRER learned that the 66th IB was being redeployed to Malita town following complaints of human rights abuses by militant groups. But Caballero said the complaints were unfounded. ***Eldie Aguirre, Inquirer Mindanao***

Appeals for donations for Bicol

A MULTISECTORAL task force has formed "Tabang Bikol" or "Tulong sa mga Nasalanta ng Bagyo sa Bikol" for the relief drive for disaster-stricken Bicolanos. The various organizations and institutions in the task force urge civic-minded citizens to donate food stuff like canned goods, dried fish, coffee and sugar, rice, medicines, clothes, water and water-purification tablets and materials for temporary shelter. The task force also welcomes cash or check donations to be used to buy goods and fund the operations, according to a news release e-mailed to the INQUIRER. Donations can be brought at the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan office at Erythrina Building, 1 corner Matatag & Maaralin Streets, Barangay Central, Quezon City. The task force has set relief missions on Dec. 9-10 and Dec. 15-17 in Guinobatan, Camalig, Daraga, Legazpi City and Sto. Domingo. For details, contact Yvonne Luna at 951-1027 or 0917-5308925 and Abby Fulgueras at 931-5911 or (0921) 6628718.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Teachers learn English anew with software

DAVAO CITY—AMID WHAT ECONOMISTS see as an alarming decline of English speaking and writing skills among new graduates nationwide, teachers in two Mindanao universities are learning the language all over again on their computers.

"Learning English has never been so much fun!" said Jocelyn Balansag-Bacasmot, a teacher at the University of Mindanao (UM). She has become adept at the use of the DynEd software in the computer-based English language training recently piloted by the Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) here.

"The software is user-friendly and will surely amaze teachers and students and people from all walks of life," she said.

"Even for someone not familiar with computers like me, the software is easy to use," added Erlinda Allesa, a professor at the Notre Dame University (NDU).

Bacasmot and Allesa are among the 23 teachers who went through an intensive three-day training on international business English in October, a program that the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (AmCham) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) recently initiated in Mindanao.

Pilot schools

The UM in Davao and the NDU in Cotabato have been chosen pilot schools for the USAID-funded project that seeks to arrest the decline of English skills among students through a learning program tailored for students and teachers.

"We regard the decline in English proficiency among Filipino students and recent graduates as quite alarming," said JoAnne Loquellano, project director of the Promoting English Proficiency (PEP). The project is an AmCham initiative that partnered with the GEM.

"Statistics from the business process outsourcing industry show that about 95 percent of job applicants nationwide are rejected primarily because of poor English skills," Loquellano said.

"This is not only true for call centers and similar companies but also of the large number of industries that need good English skills in the international language of business," she added.

The teachers admit that the declining proficiency in the English language has become a serious problem in Mindanao.

"Many of our students cannot express themselves in correct, simple English," said Helen Ang, a UM teacher who also trained under the program. "Even when they reached college, their background on the English language is quite inadequate."

"Even English skills among teachers are problematic," Lyra Dumaguing, another UM teacher trainee, said.

"We need proficiency of the language to be globally competitive. A student who is competent in this language has an edge over those who are not," said Jocelyn Balili, also a UM teacher.

Learning atmosphere

Each pilot university sets up its Computerized English Language Center (CELC), where computer workstations running the DynEd English Language Solution software, provides the right learning atmosphere for students. DynEd-trained instructors are also there to assist students.

"What's good about the DynEd software is that it seamlessly blends classroom teaching and computer-aided instruction, using visual clues to help the users grasp concepts and associate images with the corresponding English words," Loquellano said.

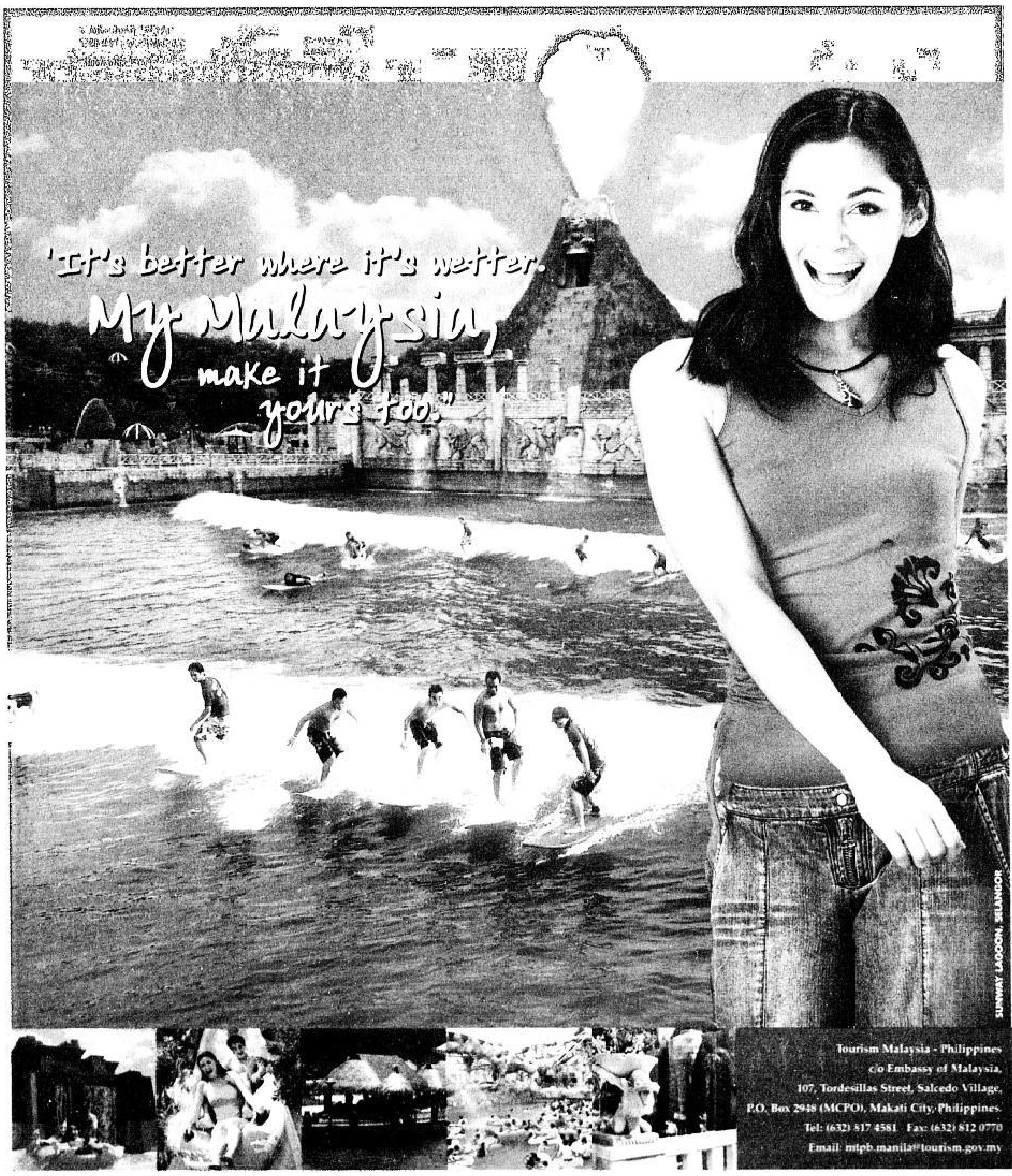
DynEd also allows trainees to learn English at their own pace, starting at their own proficiency level, working up to a certain standard where they can already speak the language in a universally-accepted accent, for instance. Built-in placement tests gauge their levels of proficiency as they gain mastery of the language, helping them see how far their English language skills have improved.

Teachers can finally measure their skills at the end of the program through the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), a certification used by employers worldwide to gauge the English proficiency of their employees, Loquellano said.

The PEP, which has been involved in critical awareness drive on the importance of English for Filipino jobseekers, has set up 23 CELCs with other partners in Dagupan City, Batangas City, Laguna, Metro Manila, Sagay City, Zamboanga City and Cagayan de Oro City.

The program seeks to train 20 more DynEd trainors, 100 English teachers and 2,000 students in the next 10 months.

Germelina Lacorte, Inquirer Mindanao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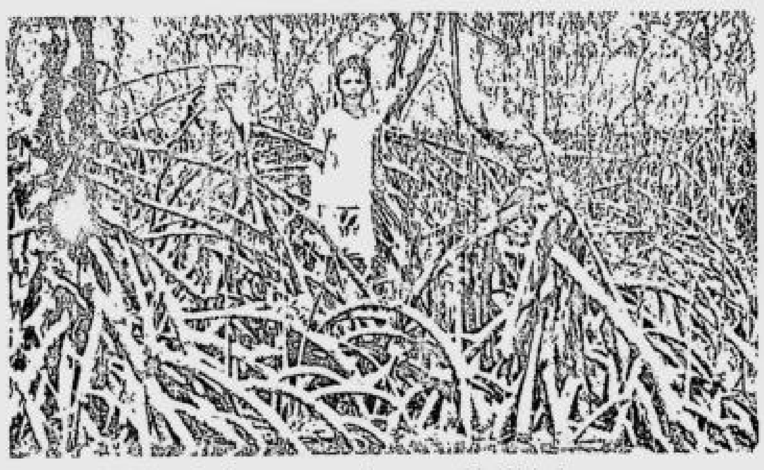
P5-M mangrove nursery launched in Guimaras

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas



A MASSIVE death of mangroves happened in Sitio Luzaran, Barangay La Paz, Nueva Valencia, Guimaras after the oil spill in August.
PDI PHOTO

ILOILO CITY—THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources has launched a P5-million mangrove nursery in Guimaras as part of its rehabilitation and restoration program of mangroves affected by an oil spill.

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes on Thursday led the launching at Barangay Tando in Nueva Valencia town, the worst hit among five municipalities of the island-province.

The 5,000-square-meter nursery, funded by the Mirant Foundation, is the first of three central nurseries to be set up to replenish or replace mangroves that died after the oil spill hit the island on Aug. 11.

Two other central nurseries will be set up off Panobolon Island in Nueva Valencia and in Sibunag town.

Seven subsidiary nurseries will also be put up in these two towns, said DENR regional executive director Julian Amador in a press conference.

Funding for the other nurseries would come from the P130-million fund for the environmental rehabilitation program that will be implemented by the DENR, he said.

The program involves the planting of 200,000 seedlings to replace the affected mangroves. These will be replanted in new sites or the affected areas after three to six months.

Mangroves are essential to the environment and marine life because they provide shelter for terrestrial life and food for various organisms, and protect the shoreline from wave action.

Amador said the replanting could be completed by the end of next year in Guimaras and Iloilo.

A total of 438 ha of mangroves in Guimaras out of 957.5 ha were affected by the oil spill, according to a DENR assessment conducted in August.

In Iloilo, 7.3 ha of mangroves were affected in Concepcion town and 18.6 ha in Ajuy. The oil sludge reached the shores of these towns from the Panay Gulf due to the northeasterly direction of the current.

In the affected mangrove areas of Guimaras, 92.5 ha are for enrichment planting and 60 ha are for new plantation.

The areas targeted for enrichment planting in Iloilo include a 1-ha area in Concepcion and 5.5 ha in Ajuy town.

Reyes said the mangrove rehabilitation program involved providing livelihood to residents especially those affected by the oil spill.

Amador said the program also involves the monitoring of mangroves and studies on bioremediation efforts.

Scientists have said that the full effect of the oil spill on the mangroves will only be known after several years.

Amador said the quality of coastal waters was improving and the toxic levels of the air in the affected communities were within normal range.

Nueva Valencia Mayor Diosdado Gonzaga said the residents have gradually returned to fishing.

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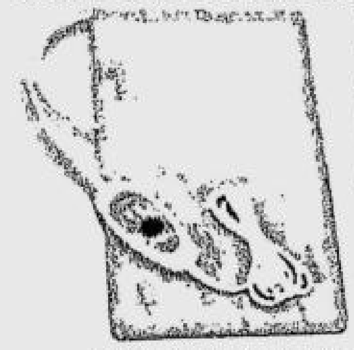

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Cordillera elders promote peace, cultural heritage

By Desiree Caluza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—TRIBAL ELDERS from the Cordillera have formed a group to unite peace pact and non-peace pact holders to strengthen local governance among indigenous communities in the region.

The group, called the Cordillera Elders Organization (CEO), was also organized to promote peace, land preservation and cultural heritage and to call for an end of tribal war and political killings.

Johnny Sawadan, secretary general of the Binodngan Peoples Organization (BPO), said the congress of elders united the *binodngan* (areas where peace pacts or *bodong* are applied) and non-*binodngan* elders to broaden their alliances in defending their land from extractive industries such as large-scale mining, dams and logging.

Sawadan said *binodngan* areas still exist in various communities in Kalinga, Mt. Province and Abra.

"The *bodong* system in these provinces is still strong," he said.

He said the cooperation of peace pact and non-peace pact holders will unite binodngan areas in the decision-making process and agreements on the entry of government-initiated development projects.

Responsibility

Elders who participated in the congress said the formation of the CEO was one of the concrete steps that would address .concerns of the tribes.

"We are organizing because it is our responsibility to address the livelihood and concerns of our respective communities," said Ama Julio Longan, BPO vice chair.

Sawadan said the elders agreed that peace pacts, which are enforced between two contending tribes, would be honored by other tribes to push a common issue.

Sawadan cited the "multilateral agreements" of indigenous communities in the late 1970s and 1980s when they took a united stand to oppose the Chico Dam project pushed by the administration of strongman Ferdinand Marcos in Kalinga.

Opposition

The Bontoc tribe of Mt. Province and the Butbut tribe of Kalinga led the opposition to the project that would have submerged their farmlands and communities.

Sawadan said tribes in other provinces honored the agreement between the Bontocs and Butbuts.

"The history of multilateral agreements among tribes by peace pact holders inspired the elders of today to foster a broader alliance to address the pressing issues faced by indigenous communities in the Cordillera," he said.

Indigenous communities still adhere to the traditional practice of consulting and listening to elders in deciding local governance issues, he said.

He said traditional practices such as the *dap-ay* in Mt. Province, *hedit* in Ifugao and *tongtong* in Benguet, that promote community dialogues, are still strong and upheld by the indigenous communities.

"We are going back to our communities to share what we have learned from each other. We will review the historic role of the tribes who defended their lands. We want to preserve the dignity of our people. We want to preserve our land and culture for our grandchildren," said Longan.

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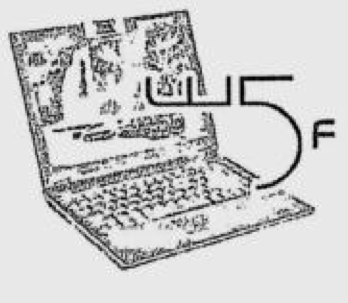

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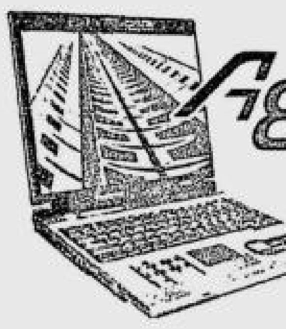

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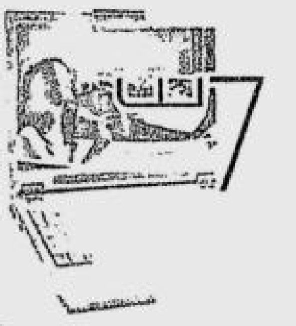

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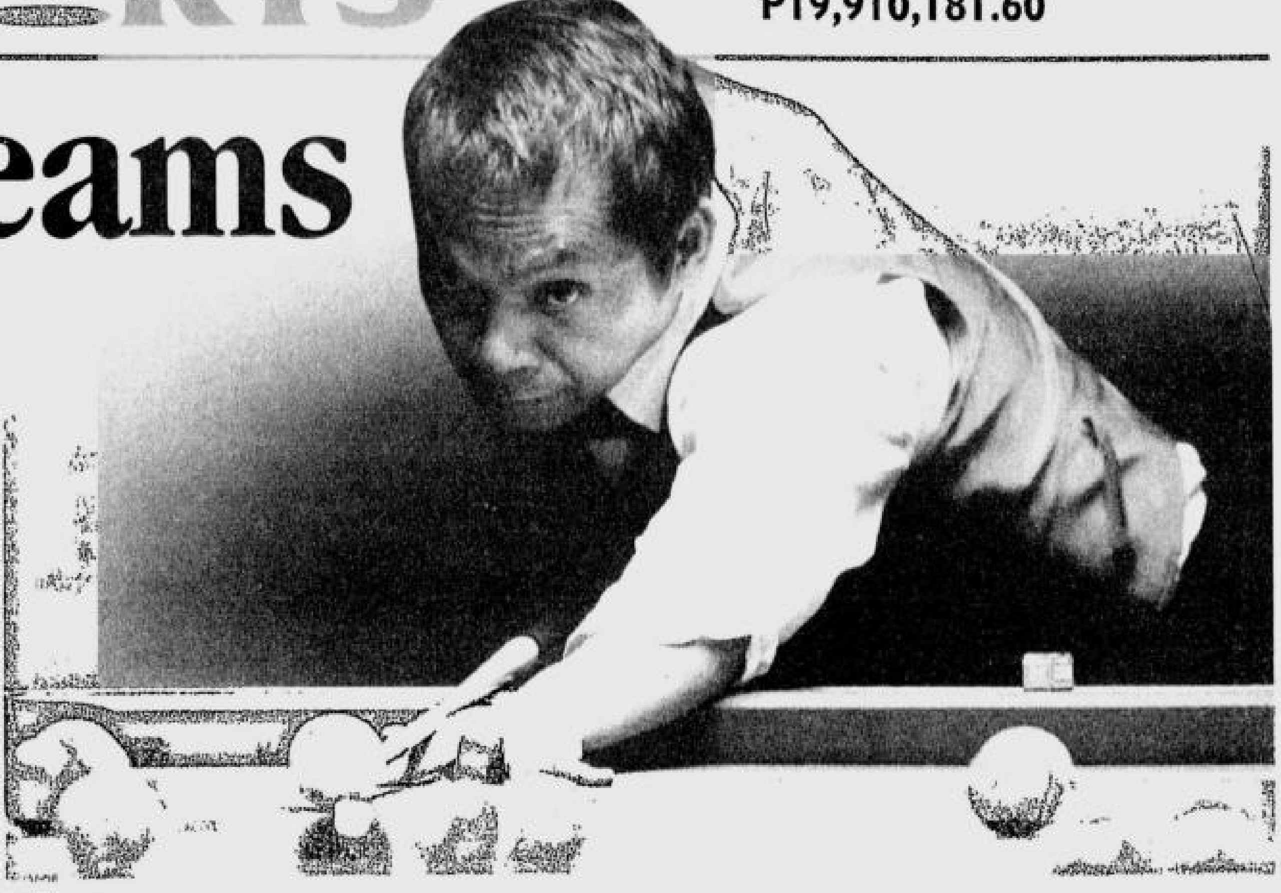

LEONARDO ANDAM executes a shot during the 8-ball singles finals Saturday night in the Asian Games. LYN RILLON

More Asian Games and other sports stories on A31 to 36

Gabica, Go settle for silver medals; Payla gains finals

By Ted S. Melendres
Sports Editor

DOHA, QATAR—BILLIARDS PLAYER ANTONIO Gabica came within two racks of the gold and taekwondo bet Thsomlee Go bowed to a foe who runs from a fight as the Philippines settled for a pair of silver medals 10 days through the 15th Asian Games here.

Flyweight Violito Payla became the first Filipino pug to earn a shot at the gold when he pummelled China's Yang Bo to submission via RSC-Os (referee stop contest-outscored) one minute and 15 seconds into the third round of their semifinal encounter.

Gabica led Satoshi Kawabata, 7-4, and was tantalizingly close to the hill when he played the 8 ball soft and missed the pocket, allowing the veteran Japanese to surge back into the match and snare the gold medal, 9-7, in the 8-ball event late Saturday night.

And the impressive Go, never a fighter to pick up points on counter strikes, hounded South Korea's Kim Ju-yong for most of the 62-kilogram finals before yielding, 1-4, and settling for a much-deserved silver.

Gabica's dreadful error in the 12th rack became the turning point of the match as the Japanese cashed in, winning the next five racks to pocket the victory, Japan's first in the event in the Asiad.

Big mistake

"That was a really big mistake," said the 34-year-old Cebuano after the match that lasted a little more than three hours at the Al-Sadd Multi-Purpose Hall. "I should have hit the 8 ball harder."

"If Gabica had hit a stronger shot, he would have won," said the 36-year-old Kawabata from Osaka. "He made a soft shot, that's why he missed. I got to 7-6 and it was a big point in the game."

Go's attack-oriented strategy impressed even his foe, who piled up four straight points in the first two rounds and then opted to protect his lead by just warding off the Filipino's thrusts.

"[Go] never stopped attacking but I managed to score when I saw him drop his guard," said the taller Kim. "I say he deserved to be in the finals."

The 25-year-old from Binondo, Manila, displayed his sharp side when he downed Saudi Arabia's Tukri Abdulaziz Al Rashed, 3-1, in the quarterfinals and the similarly offense-oriented Taiwanese Su Tai-yuan, 2-1, to barge into the gold medal match with Kim.

"I knew it was close and that's why I was aggressive," said Go. "When he got ahead in the second round, he just ran and protected his lead. I wanted to catch him in the last round because I knew I could score, but he ran again.

Payla took the first two rounds by scores of 12-9 and 16-8 before going into overdrive in the third and connecting with 12 points to put the match away from the overmatched slugger from Guangdong.

The victory set up Payla against defending champion Somjit Jongjohor of Thailand in an expectedly riveting final. Jongjohor overwhelmed Japan's Katsuaki Susa, also via RSC-Os 50 seconds into the third round.

Piece of banana

"I have fought him (Payla) before, in Vietnam, and I won," said Jongjohor. "It will be a piece of banana for me. It has been four years, though, and I'm older, so anything could happen."

The once-mighty bowlers stood just a single event away from complete humiliation after Liza del Rosario wound up 10th and out of the stepladder finals in the women's Masters with 3363 pinfalls. Marianne Daisy Posadas, the most consistent among the women here, settled for 11th place (3349).

South Korea's Choi Jin-a topped the 16-game series with 3750, followed by teammate Kim Yeau-jin (3586), Malaysia's Esther Cheah Mei Lan (3572), Thailand'S Angkana Netrviseth (3501) and Indonesia's Putty Insavilla Armein (3497).

Marathoner Eduardo Buenavista ran a relatively fast two hours, 24 minutes and 50 seconds but still finished 12th in the traditional closing event of the Games won by Qatar's Mubarak Hassan Shami in 2:12:44. Bahrain's Khalid Kamal Yaseen took the silver in 2:15:36 with Japan's Satoshi Osaki clinching the bronze in 2:15:36.

If it's any consolation, the diminutive, 28-year-old Buenavista was more than nine minutes quicker than the next best Southeast Asian, Vietnam's Nguyen Chi Dong (2:34:29), in the early-morning race.

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MMDA to operate inn for transients

'Tulugan sa Bayan' project offers clean, safe lodgings for ₱25 a night

By Tarra V. Quismundo

STARTING NEXT YEAR, MINIMUM WAGE workers in Metro Manila will be able to avail of clean and safe lodgings for only P25 a night.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) will launch today its "Tulugan sa Bayan" project which aims to put up an inn that can provide affordable temporary shelter to laborers, contractual employees and transients.

"This will provide facilities for workers and transients who may be living a distance away from the city center so they would not have to spend so much for their fare. For P25, they could stay at the inn for 12 hours … We are not doing this to make money; the fee would be used to keep the facility well-maintained," MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said yesterday.

Joint project

The "workers' inn" is a joint undertaking between the MMDA and the National Power Corp. which has offered the use of its four-story building on Bonifacio Drive near Intramuros, Manila.

The old Napocor building would be fitted with double-deck beds to accommodate about 1,000 persons at a time. The ground floor would be leased out to canteen owners to give them an appropriate place of business and, at the same time, provide workers a place where they could buy affordable meals.

"It would probably take two months for us to fix up the place. So by February, it might already be operational. It would have rooms with double-bunk beds and common bathrooms and toilets, then we would have a food court on the ground floor," Fernando said.

"There are no reservations. Service is on a first-come, first-serve basis. They could come in after office hours, around after five, then spend the night, and they would have to be out before 10 a.m. for the cleaning, so that nobody could claim that one person overstayed," the MMDA chair told the INQUIRER over the phone.

Added benefits

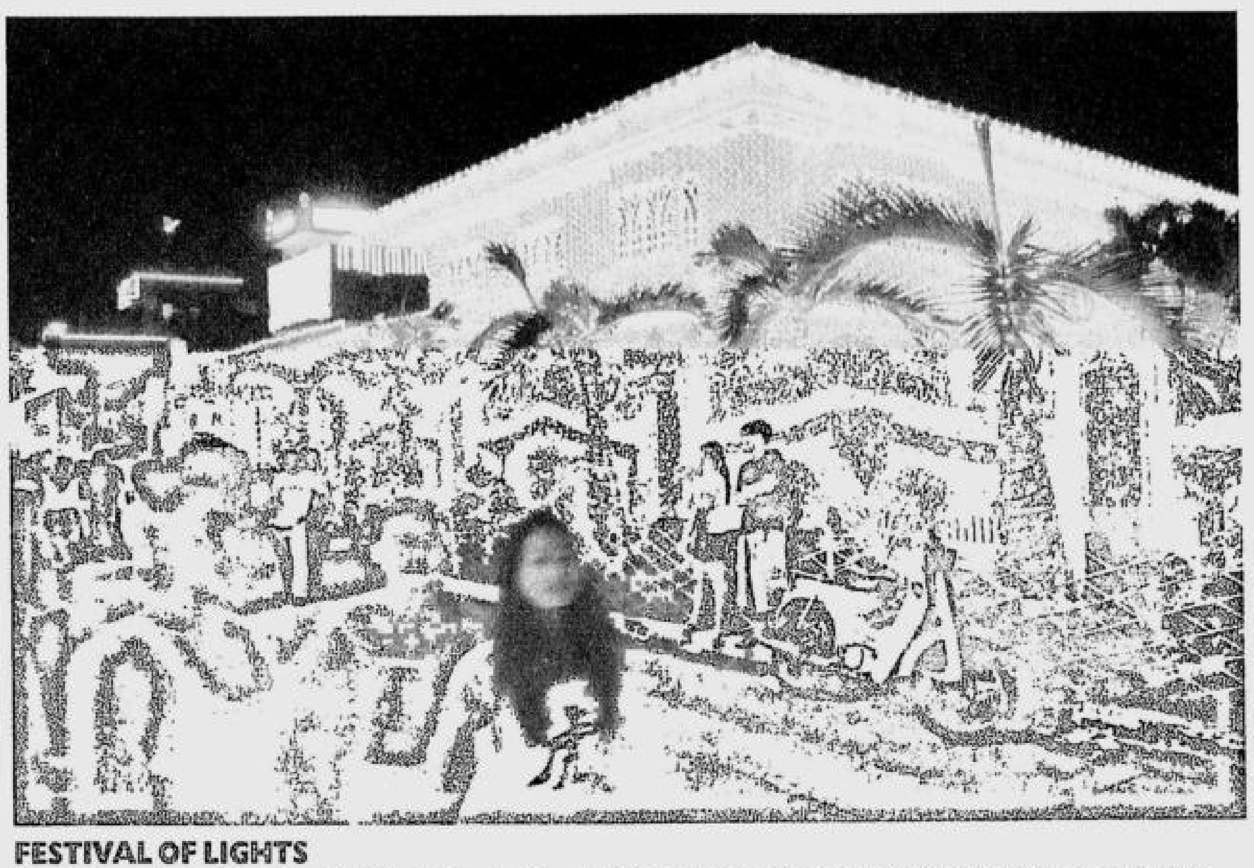
Fernando said the inn would have a "significant effect" on the traffic situation in the metropolis as well as the lack of shelter for the huge number of transients which arrive in the city every day.

"There are workers who sleep under bridges, on the street and when we find them relocation areas, they tend to come back. So this is a solution for us to eliminate the problem of illegal dwellers," he added.

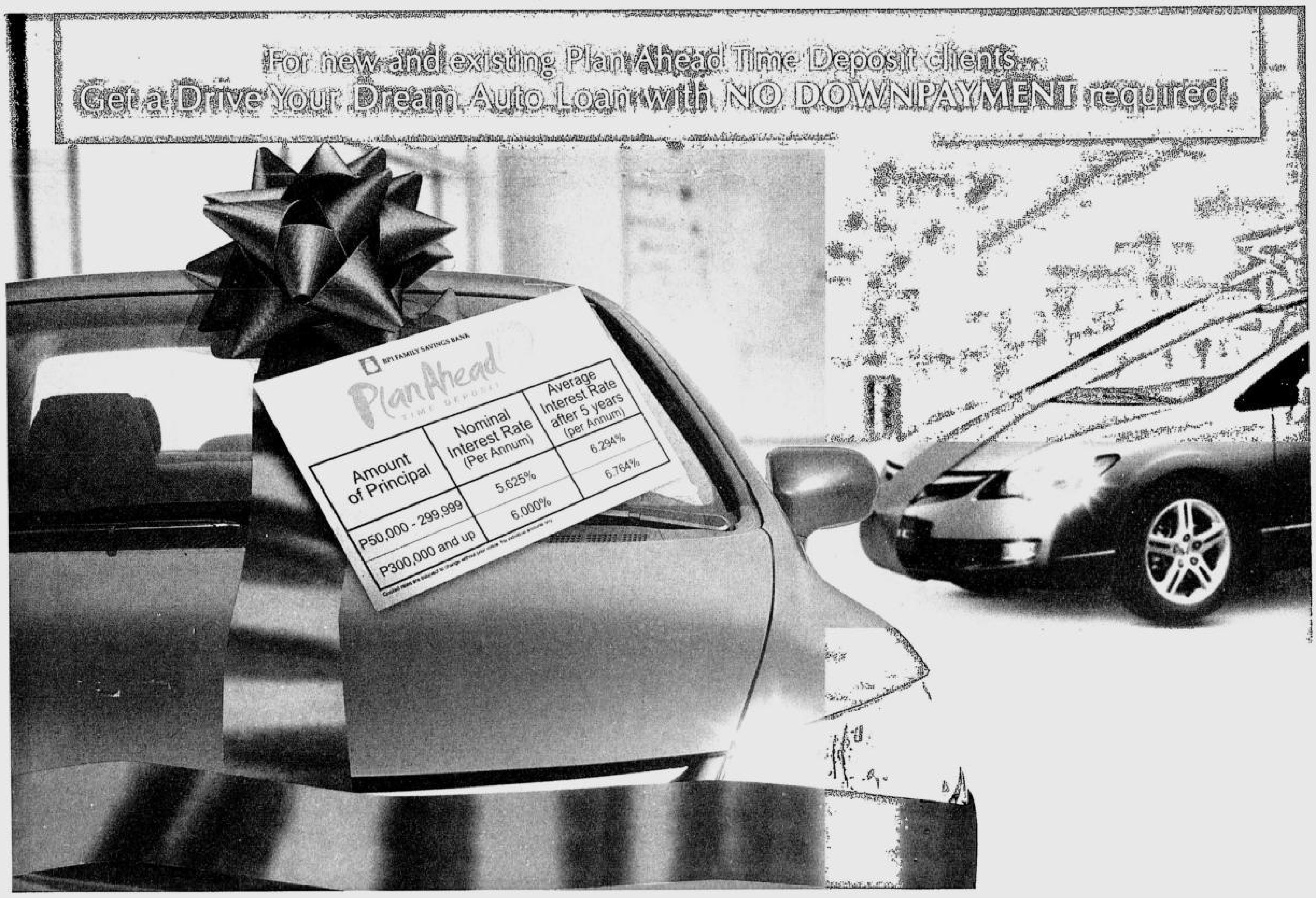
According to Fernando, the program could also "solve the volatility of employment," which often has entire families moving from one place to another when the work contract of the head of the family has expired.

"The worker will not have to uproot his entire family from their home every time [he looks for a new job]. It's only the worker that has to move, and that reduces by four the number of

MMDA/ A26



FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS
People have started flocking nightly to Policarpio Street in Mandaluyong City to view the houses decked out in their holiday best. The yearly spectacle has turned the street into an attraction during the Christmas season. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN



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Abortion pill pushers in Quiapo warned

By Margaux C. Ortiz

VENDORS WHO ATTEMPT TO SELL ABORTION-inducing pills in the Quiapo area will automatically be slapped with three charges, the chief of the Manila Police District (MPD) warned.

MPD acting director Senior Supt. Danilo Abarzosa issued the warning following the relief of 12 policemen assigned at the Plaza Miranda detachment in Quiapo. They were sacked for failing to implement an order to clear the area of vendors who allegedly use the sale of herbs as a front for selling abortion pills.

Abarzosa said they would arrest and file three charges against recalcitrant vendors, including obstruction, vending without permit and sale of unregulated drugs.

"We have mobile units constantly monitoring the area to ensure that Plaza Miranda remains free of hardheaded vendors who insist on selling these pills," the police chief warned.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza ordered the relief of the Plaza Miranda policemen on Thursday after seeing traders still selling herbs in the area beside the police community precinct.

He had earlier instructed Abarzosa to ensure that no abortion-inducing substances were sold anywhere in the city.

"These illegal activities continue to proliferate because authorities themselves do not only allow them but even protect them," an irate Atienza said in an earlier interview.

MMDA . . .

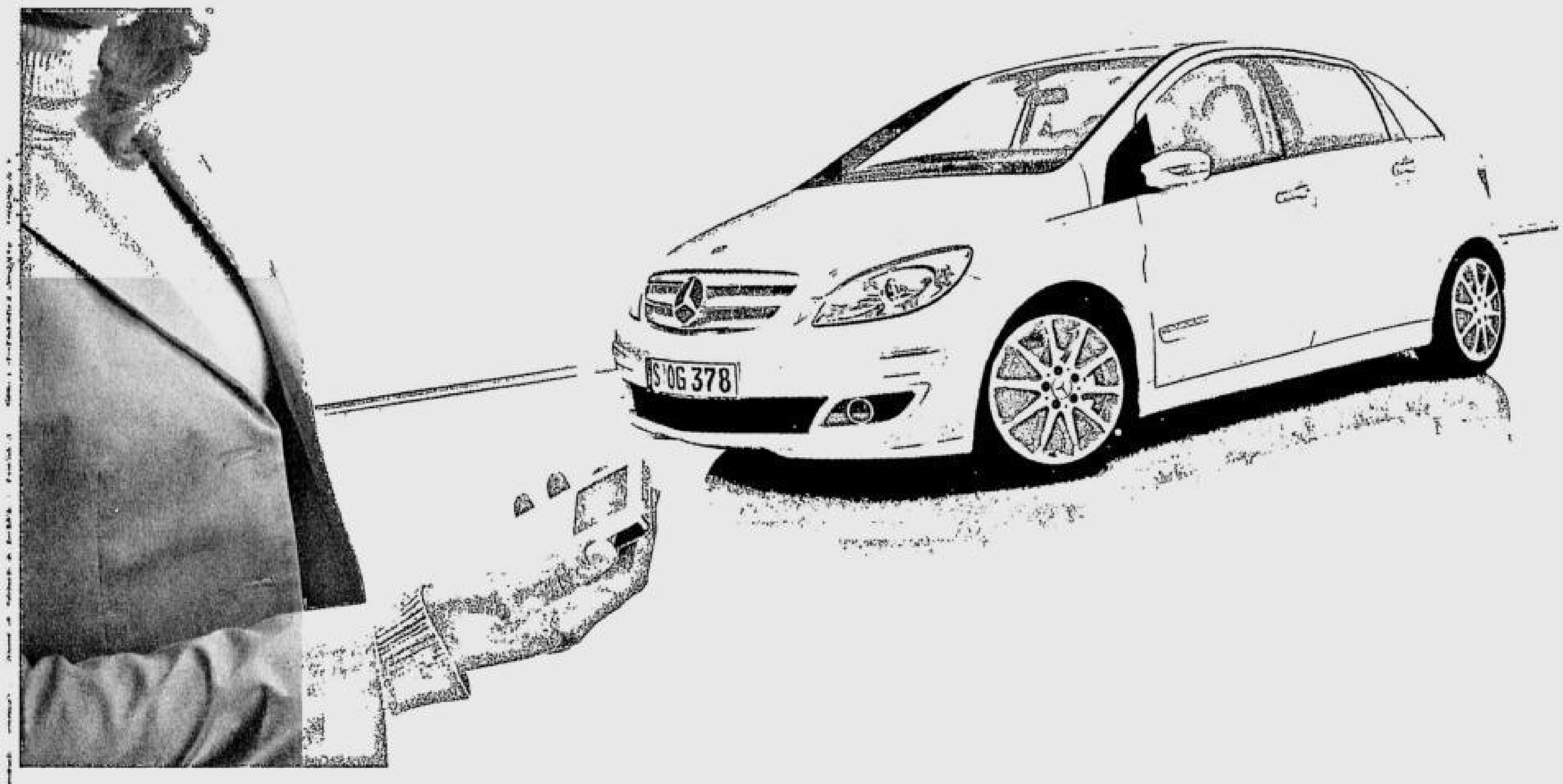
From page A25

people who would have been added to the Metro's population," Fernando explained, using the government's standard five-per-family estimate.

First of many inns

The inn in Intramuros is envisioned by the MMDA to be the first of at least 40 similar facilities that it hopes to put with the help of the private sector.

"This will be a pilot project then the private sector could come in. We have to initiate it so we can show that it is a viable undertaking. It will be a model, then we will set standards for cleanliness, order, the rights and privileges of [bed spacers] and the obligations of operators," Fernando said.



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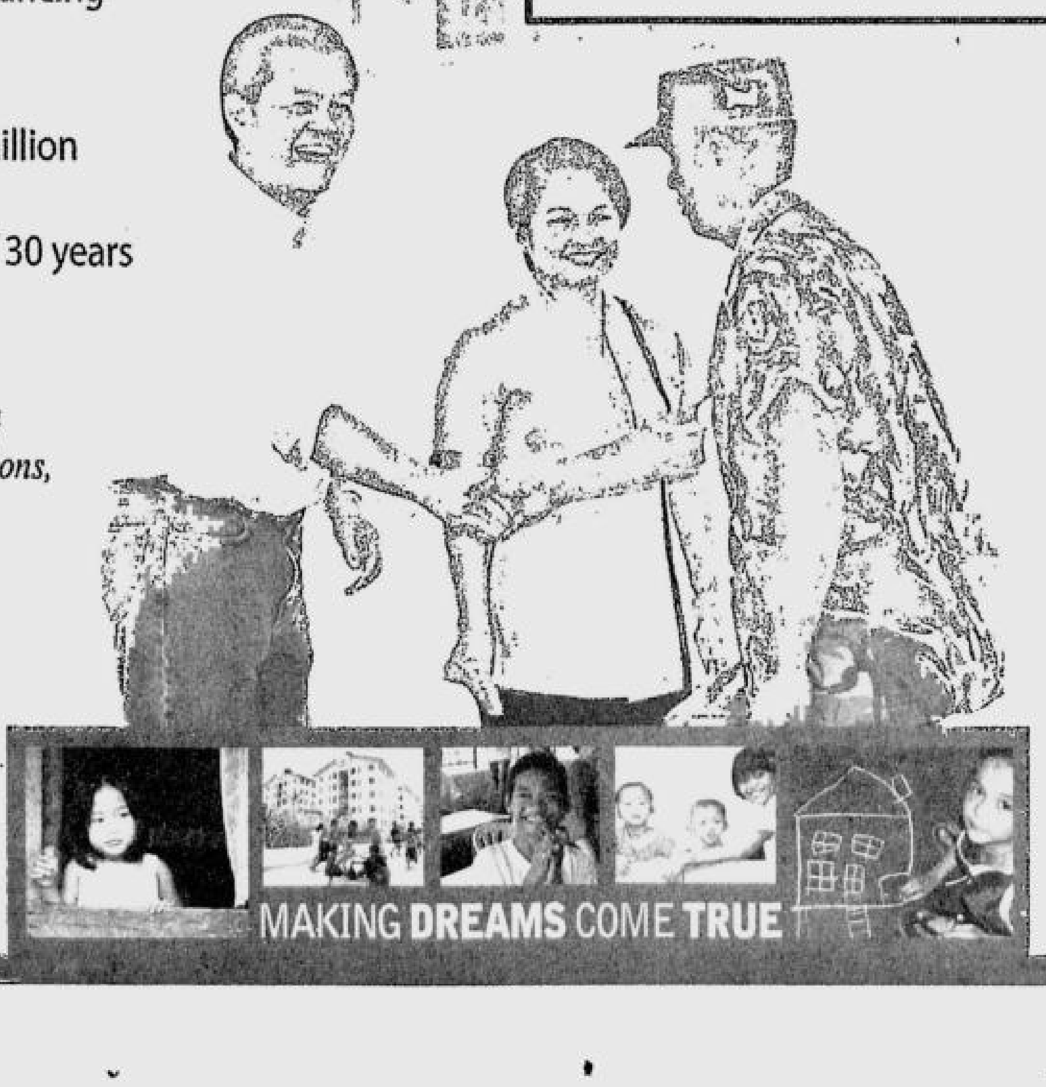

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Atrium Building, Makati Avenue cor.
Paseo de Roxas, Makati City
Text Hotline: 2990-7244244
Call Center: 724-4244 (Pag-IBIG)
Website: http://www pagibigfund.gov.ph

QC gov't wants to see more policemen in malls

By DJ Yap

THE QUEZON CITY GOVERNMENT has deployed more policemen to malls and shopping centers, in anticipation of the influx of Christmas shoppers as well as criminal elements who want to cash in on the holidays.

Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. ordered the mobilization of additional personnel from the police and concerned City Hall units in crowded areas in the city, particularly shopping complexes.

In response, newly appointed Quezon City Police District director Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula vowed to deploy 200 more policemen currently based at the district headquarters in Camp Karingal.

Gatdula told the mayor that he would also revitalize the "Pulis sa Barangay" program which seeks to enhance police visibility in communities.

Belmonte said everybody, especially the police, "must be in their element" to be able to respond effectively to rising crime during the holiday season.

In a related development, the mayor asked police officials to speed up efforts to acquire motor vehicles and equipment they might need to respond to emergencies.

Belmonte also ordered city parks and development administration head Zaldy de la Rosa to speed up the installation or repair of street lights, particularly in unlit and crime-prone areas.

METRO
Citizen's call
0918-8985566

ALONG Kalayaan Avenue going to Quezon City Hall, half of the street are being utilized by a taxi company as a parking area, thereby causing traffic. Sila pa yung matatapang 'pag sinita mo.

Allan Manalang, Quezon City

Please ban or impound all Caloocan-bound jeepneys using the Edsa Seminary Road as a terminal. These jeepneys wait for passengers along Edsa which has already caused an accident. MMDA and LTO, do not wait for another one to happen. Act now.

Roland Garros, Caloocan City

Maynilad has been performing very poorly. Since they took over from Nawasa, we only get 10 hours of water a day. And now, we don't have water at all. Wala man lang notice and they don't even supply us with water even for just a few hours para makapag-ipon man lang. It's different with Manila Water, sana sila na lang ang maghandle sa amin.

Danilo Guzman, Paltok, Quezon City

Along C5 Road after the toll gate, it is very dark.

Totz Leonardo, Parañaque

I thought we have a ban on billboards? Is the vicinity of Quiapo Church exempted?

Eddie Tiu, Manila

Car thieves strike anew in Quezon City

By DJ Yap

CAR HIJACKERS STRUCK ANEW early yesterday in Quezon City, taking at gunpoint a sedan owned by a 25-year-old man.

Four armed men made off with an unregistered black Toyota Vios, with conduction sticker number AM-3421, at 1:50 a.m. along Sto. Domingo Street, police said.

Investigation showed that the car owner, Bryan Manicap, was driving the sedan when he was blocked by a green Mitsubishi Lancer without license plates upon reaching Maria Clara Street in Barangay Sto. Domingo.

The men alighted from the Lancer, aimed their guns at Manicap and ordered him to get out of his vehicle, according to a report by SPO1 Andres Balot of La Loma Police Station.

The men quickly boarded the Vios and sped away, followed by the Lancer, Balot said.

The victim reported the incident to the La Loma station, which turned over the case to the Quezon City Police District's anti-carnapping (Ancar) unit.

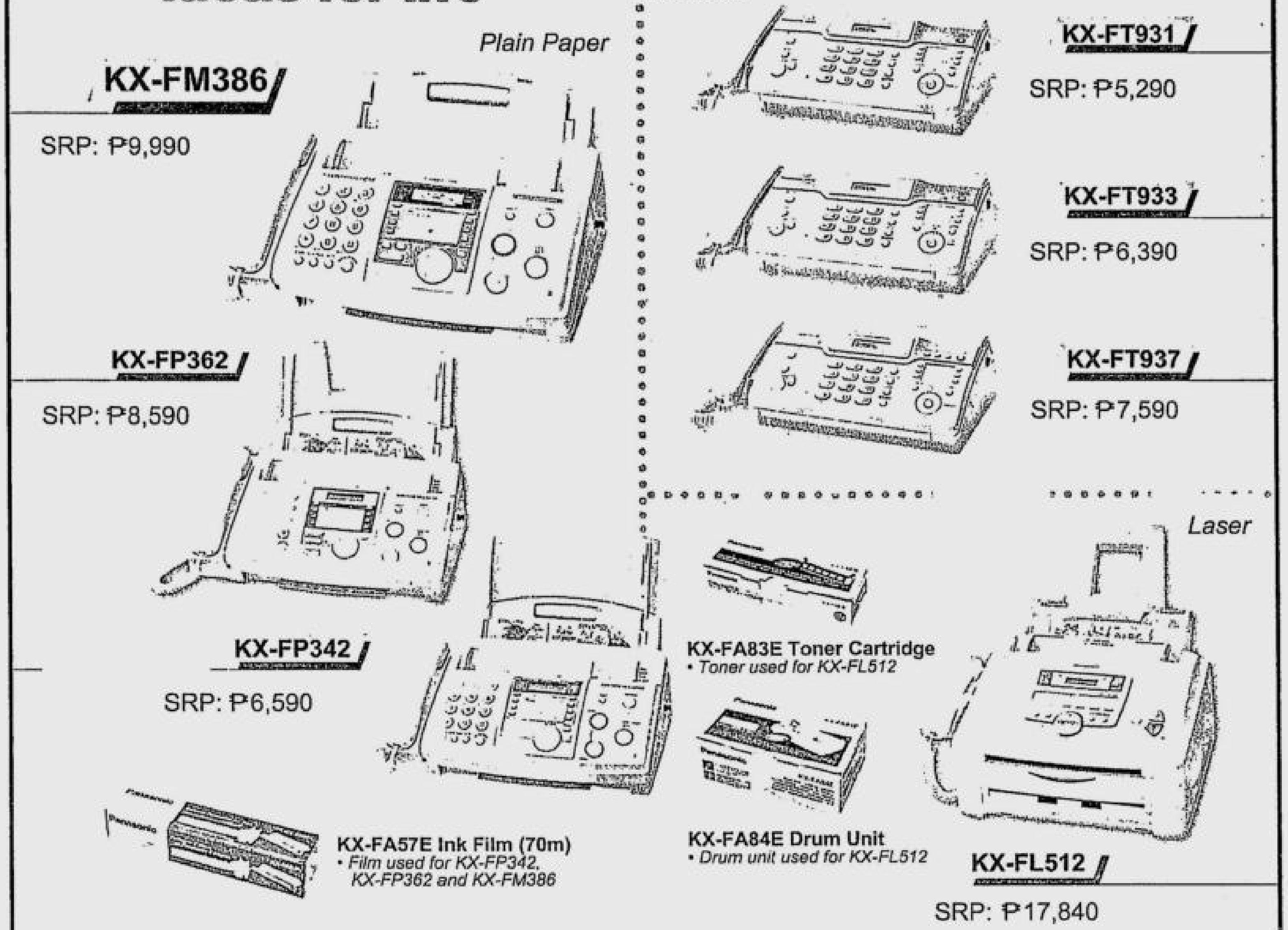
A desk officer at Ancar said it was the first "carjacking" incident this month, not including cases of vehicles stolen while parked.

According to an Ancar tally, there were five incidents in November, six in October and four in September.

An official said that car hijackings usually go up during the Christmas season.

On Nov. 28, armed car thieves took off with composer Vehnee Saturno's Toyota Fortuner in front of a bar on West Avenue, taking Saturno with them, before dropping him off in Marilao, Bulacan.

Police said there was no new development in the Saturno case.



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METROBRIEFS

Eastern Metro safe

[illegible] secure the traditional early dawn [illegible] will start in the next few days, the [illegible]red residents in the eastern part of [illegible] that the area remained "the safest in [illegible]," Eastern Police District chief [illegible] said he has already ordered the ad[illegible]yment of policemen in key areas. [illegible] more police visibility on the streets, [illegible] and other business establishments [illegible] churches," Ticman also told the IN[illegible]. He said policemen on board motorcycles [illegible] also patrol the streets in compliance with a [illegible] Capital Region Police Office directive.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Foundation meeting set

THE FOUNDATION for Adolescent Development (FAD) Inc. is bringing together officials from Marikina, Valenzuela, Caloocan, Quezon City, Las Piñas and Dasmariñas, Cavite in a partners meeting on Dec. 12, at Traders Hotel in Manila. To be taken up during the meeting are sustainability mechanisms for Teen Healthquarters (THQ)—a possible strategy for addressing adolescent health and development as a component of their population program. THQ aims to provide a service center that makes accessible to young people aged 15 to 24 information-education, values clarification and behavior modeling as well as select medical services relevant to sexuality, reproductive health and development needs. The service is managed by youth friendly competent professionals and volunteers.

DID YOU KNOW

THE PHILIPPINE Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI) on Commonwealth Avenue in Diliman, Quezon City is the sole government agency mandated to undertake research and draft regulations on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It is also tasked with enforcing these regulations to protect the health of radiation workers and the public. Republic Act 2067 created in 1958 the Philippine Atomic Energy Commission which was renamed the PNRI by Executive Order 128 in 1987. It is currently a research institute under the Department of Science and Technology.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

On Rights Day, women to protest worldwide against rape in Darfur

LONDON—PROTESTS ARE PLANNED around the world Sunday against the mass rape of women and girls allegedly by Sudanese government soldiers and allied militiamen in Sudan's western Darfur region.

"A terrible crime against humanity is taking place in Darfur and it is worsening by the week," said Amir Osman, representing the Globe for Darfur, a coalition of activist groups, including London-based Amnesty International.

Coming on Human Rights Day, the appeal is part of a campaign by former and current world leaders, human rights activists and others to stop massacres and human rights abuses in Darfur that some say already amount to genocide.

"We're now at a turning point," Osman said in a statement.

"Either the international community can turn its words into actions and hold the government of Sudan accountable for its violations, or it can turn its back on the people of Darfur.

"Today thousands of people right across the globe will be saying, enough is enough—our governments must do more to end the mass rape and slaughter." Women will set off rape alarms and blow whistles in the protests at Sudanese embassies in London and other capitals. A rape victim from Darfur will join the protest in London to talk about her own suffering.

Activists said that even though troops and militiamen are using rape and sexual violence as a weapon, not a single person has been convicted of such a crime in the conflict.

Ireland's former president and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson and other prominent stateswomen called Saturday for the international community to deploy peacekeepers to Darfur to protect women there from rape.

Worried about the "appalling" human rights abuses, British Prime Minister Tony Blair appealed the same day to the Sudanese government and rebels to implement an immediate truce and seek a political solution to the conflict.

Blair pledged that Britain would continue to back agreements reached this year in Nigeria and Ethiopia on the deployment of United Nations and African Union peacekeepers to Darfur.

The Darfur conflict, which has been raging for more than three years, has claimed between 200,000 and 300,000 lives and displaced more than 2.4 million people.

In addition to Britain, protests are planned Sunday in Australia, Bahrain, Benin, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Finland, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Luxembourg, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, and the United States. *AFP*

THE SPACE shuttle Discovery lifts off from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida and into the night sky Dec. 9 on a complex ISS construction mission. REUTERS

RESOLUTION ON THE SUSPENSION OF THE MANDATORY USE OF BIODIESEL

Whereas, the Government has taken keen interest in promoting the use of Coconut Methyl Ester (CME), commonly called coco-biodiesel, as alternative fuel in support of the Clean Air Act and improve the lives of coconut farmers;

Whereas, the public transport sector has always been supportive of government efforts toward energy independence and sustainable economic growth without sacrificing health and environmental concerns;

Whereas, Senate Bill 2007 mandates the use of biofuels in the transport sector;

Whereas, biodiesel is a relatively new technology necessitating the need for a more extensive, transparent, and comprehensive technical evaluation on the use of CME or biodiesel as an alternative source of fuel to determine its effects on the engine and ultimately on the lives of the millions of families dependent on the transport industry which would be adversely affected should coco-biodiesel prove to be harmful to the motor engine;

Whereas, it has been reported that coco-biodiesel would result in an increase in the cost of fuel, which in turn would impact on transport fares, and thus be an added burden to the public as a whole, especially the public transport sector, as there is no clear guarantee on engine efficiency and fuel savings;

Whereas, public transport groups were not heard nor represented during public hearings and deliberations on the Senate and House committees;

WHEREFORE, it is RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved :

That the public transport sector reiterates its all-out support on government programs and policies on energy independence, health and environmental concerns;

That, however, a more extensive, transparent and thorough study of biodiesel use shall first be undertaken by government to ensure its promised long-term beneficial effects and continued livelihood of millions of Filipinos dependent on the transport industry;

That, henceforth, it is imperative upon government to defer and suspend the implementation of its biodiesel program pending the results of these studies.

Approved on November 07, 2006 at Quezon City, Philippines.

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METRO MANILA BUSES OPERATORS ASSOC. (IMBOA)

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FEDERATION OF JEEPNEY OPERATORS AND DRIVERS ASSOC. OF THE PHILIPPINES (FEJODAP)

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ALLIANCE OF TRANSPORT OPERATORS AND DRIVERS ASSOC. OF THE PHILIPPINES (ALTODAP)

ORLANDO MARQUEZ
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INTER CITY BUS OPERATORS ASSOC. (INTERBOA)

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Drought spurs high suicide rate among Aussies

WARRACKNABEAL, AUSTRALIA—"HE TALKED about how blokes who necked themselves were weak bastards, but then he went and did it himself—stepped off an oil drum in his own workshop." Australian farmer Marshall Rodda's shock is still evident, months after a neighbor took his own life and joined the grim roll call of rural land owners who have committed suicide during the country's worst drought in a century.

The Australian general practitioners' society estimates four farmers commit suicide every week, a rate that is double the nation average.

Mental health charity Beyond Blue is so concerned about the situation it commissioned a special report into rural suicides in a bid to try to improve ways of counseling farmers.

Beyond Blue chief executive Leonie Young said reaching out to the traditionally taciturn Australian farmers presented unique problems for counselors.

"Country people in Australia are typically tough, resilient and resourceful," she said.

"These are qualities that have enabled generations of country families, and men in particular, to tough it out in hard times.

"These same qualities also prevent many men from seeking help, particularly for depression, because they're worried that asking for help could be seen as weak or shameful." It's a familar scenario to Rodda, who in his late 50s believes he has enough experience to deal with the drought but worries about younger farmers who have seen few good times during their time on the land.

"It's the young blokes who are just having a go, getting their feet under the table who I feel for," he said.

"They're probably drinking too much beer to eradicate their problems, they're stressing—the wife and kids want things that they're seeing their city counterparts get and it's a pretty tough call." The Australian government has responded by sending out "drought buses," giving farmers a mixture of advice on water-saving measures and social counseling on how to cope with "the Big Dry." "Many people who've already visited the drought bus told staff they were pleased to know they hadn't been forgotten," Human Services Minister Joe Hockey said.

Rodda said he still couldn't understand why his neighbor took his own life.

"He wasn't at the stage where he had the bank saying 'we're after you, we're going to take your property'," he said.

"He was a tough bloke, he'd drink beer and smoke and fight you if you wanted him to.

"I don't know why, a tough bloke like him, he jumped off the drum." *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

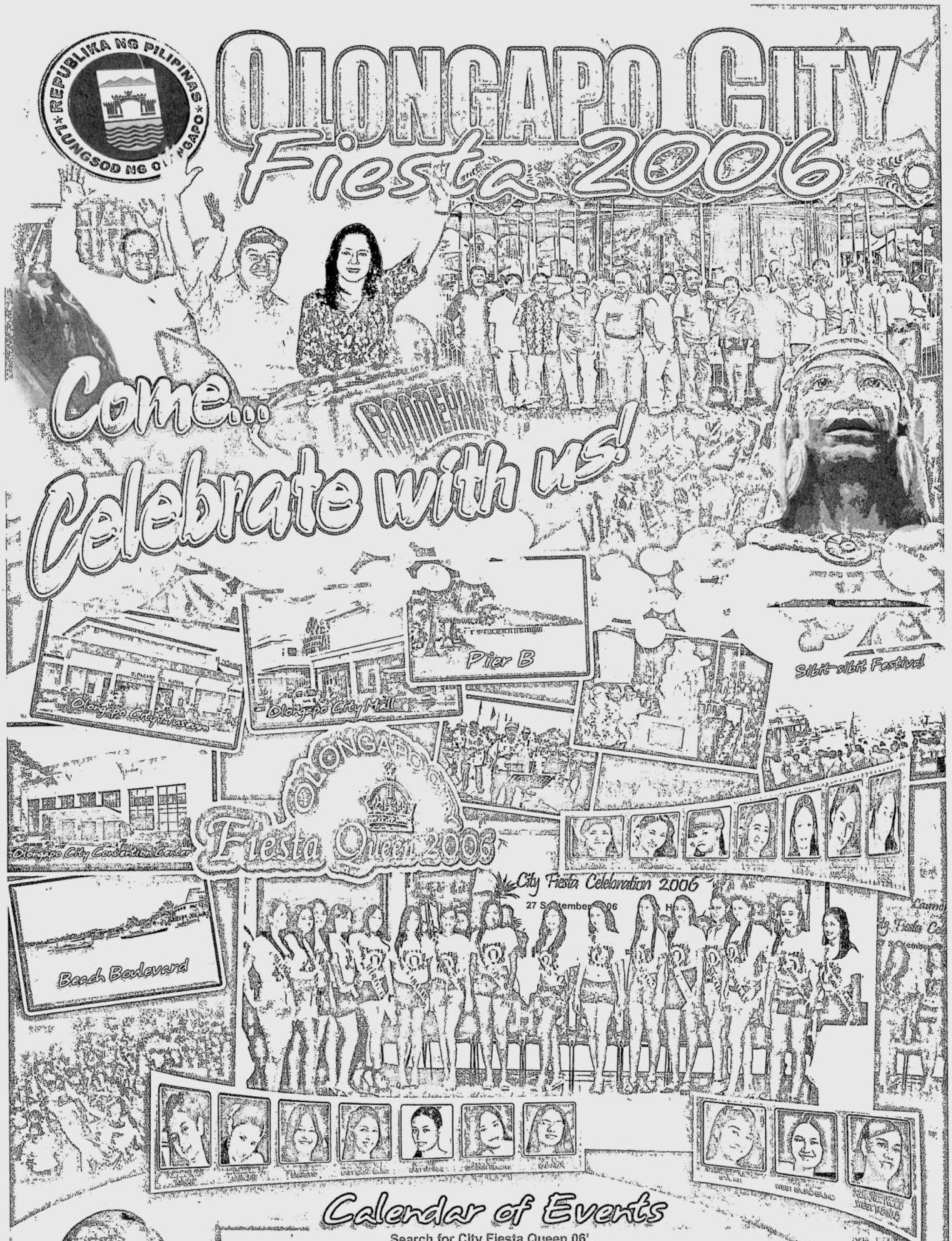
Germans find radiation linked to Litvinenko contact

HAMBURG—German police have found traces of radiation in two buildings linked to a Russian businessman who met the murdered ex-spy Alexander Litvinenko on the day he fell ill, a spokesperson said on Saturday. In a statement released after his death, Litvinenko accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of killing him. The Kremlin has denied involvement in a case that has spawned conspiracy theories, revived memories of Cold War spying and strained relations between Russia and Britain. The probe into Litvinenko's death spread to Germany when radiation traces were found overnight in the apartment of the ex-wife of businessman Dmitry Kovtun in the northern city of Hamburg. Kovtun met Litvinenko in a London bar on Nov. 1. Kovtun, who had a flat in the same block, is in hospital. *Reuters*

Rumsfeld makes surprise farewell trip to Iraq

WASHINGTON—US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld made a surprise visit to Iraq to thank US troops for their service just days before he steps down from his post, a Defense Department spokesperson said on Saturday. "The secretary is in Iraq to express appreciation to the troops for what they're doing as well as thanking the families for the sacrifices they make every day for all Americans," spokesperson Todd Vician told AFP. He said Rumsfeld had departed Friday for Iraq and offered no more details of the defense secretary's schedule. Rumsfeld resigned in November, the day after President George W. Bush's Republicans lost control of the US Congress with voter frustration over the Iraq war dominating the election. *AFP*

OLONGAPO CITY
Fiesta 2006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Olongapo City Museum
Olongapo City Mall
Olongapo City Convention Center
Beach Boulevard
OLONGAPO
Fiesta Queen 2006
City Fiesta Celebration 2006

Calendar of Events

Search for City Fiesta Queen 06'

		1st Canvassing (Korean Night @ Rizal Triangle Multi-Purpose Center)
		2nd Canvassing (Chinese Night @ Olongapo City Convention Center)
12/22	Friday	3rd Canvassing (International Night @ Rizal Triangle Mult-Purpose Center)
12/28	Thursday	Coronation Night (Filipiniana @ RizalTriangle Multi-Purpose Center)
12/29	Friday	3:30 pm Raffle Draw of Search for City Fiesta Queen 2006
		4:30-7:30 pm Marching Band Concert (@ Rizal Triangle Multi-Purpose Center)
12/30	Saturday	8:00 am Wreath Laying @ Rizal Monument
		2:00pm Grand Parade (Viewing Rizal Triangle Grand Stand)
		Float & Street Dancing Competition
		5:00pm International Food Festival @ Rizal Park
		7:00pm Marching Band Competition
12/31	Sunday	10:00pm Fireworks Display @ East Tapinac Oval Track

Other Activities

10/20-11/15	Friday	Olongapo Olympics
12/12	Tuesday	Linggo ng Kabataan Celebration
12/15	Friday	Drum & Lyre Competition
		Lantern Parade

YEAR 2007

1/17	Wednesday	Birthday of late City Mayor James L. Gordon, Sr.
2/1-3	Thursday-Friday	Olongapo City Badminton Tournament
2/14	Wednesday	Valentine Concert
2/28	Wednesday	Death Anniversary of late City Mayór James L. Gordon, Sr.
5/26	Saturday	Grand Sta, Cruzan
6/1	Friday	Cityhood Celebration & Peace & Order Parade
6/12	Tuesday	Independence Day

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Probe: No Palace plot in Diana death

LONDON—A LONG-AWAITED REPORT INTO PRINCESS DIANA'S death in a Paris car crash will confirm a French probe that it was an accident and refute theories of a plot by British intelligence, news leaks said.

The report by Lord John Stevens, the former Metropolitan Police commissioner, has concluded that Diana died in a traffic accident after her driver lost control of the car while drunk at the wheel, the leaks said.

Fleeing paparazzi photographers, Diana, 36, her boyfriend Dodi Fayed, 42, and their chauffeur Henri Paul, 41, were killed in a car crash in a Paris underpass in the early hours of August 31, 1997.

Bodyguard Trevor Rees-Jones survived.

A two-year investigation in France blamed Paul for losing control of the black Mercedes because he was driving too fast while high on drink and prescription drugs.

First to break the report's conclusions, the BBC said Friday that blood samples taken from Paul just after his death were indeed his and show him accurately to have been three times over the French drunk-driving limit.

PRINCESS Diana taken at the New York Hilton Dec. 11, 1995. AP

A source close to the French authorities told the BBC that the DNA tests were done in France within the last year, adding that DNA taken from Paul's blood samples matched that of his parents.

It said the information serves to refute conspiracy theories alleging that Paul's blood samples were switched in order to show that he was drunk.

Harrods owner Mohammed Al Fayed has long argued that his son and Diana were murdered by a British establishment plot aimed at preventing the former wife of Prince Charles, heir to the throne, from marrying a Muslim.

The Stevens report will also quash conspiracy theories that Diana was pregnant and that she planned to marry Dodi, The Observer said. *AFP*

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Life and times of Princess Diana

BRITAIN—FOLLOWING IS A chronology of the life and times of Princess Diana who died aged 36 on Aug. 31, 1997 in a car crash in Paris:

- July 1, 1961—Born into an aristocratic family, third of four children of Lord and Lady Althorp.
- 1977—Met Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, at Althorp.
- February 24, 1981—Engagement to Charles announced.
- July 29, 1981—Charles and Diana married in sumptuous ceremony at St. Paul's Cathedral in London.
- June 21, 1982—First child born, William Arthur Philip Louis, known as Wills. Diana suffered post-natal depression.
- Sept. 15, 1984—Second child born, Henry Charles Albert David, known as Harry.
- 1985—First reports of difficulties in royal marriage.
- 1986—Charles renewed his relationship with Camilla Parker Bowles, a woman he later referred to as "the love of his life." Diana developed slimming disorder bulimia nervosa. Royal couple continued public duties, but in private, led separate lives.
- June 1992 - "Diana—Her True Story," by tabloid reporter Andrew Morton, is published. Diana cooperated, through friends, in the writing of the book which showed her trapped in a loveless marriage and attempting suicide to attract Charles' attention.
- Aug. 25, 1992—Newspapers publish excerpts of taped telephone conversation between Diana and James Gilby, who called her "Squidgy" and told her repeatedly that he loved her.
- Dec. 9, 1992—Prime Minister John Major announced formal separation of the couple in parliament.
- Sept. 1994—"Princess In Love" by Anna Pasternak published, telling of an affair between Diana and cavalry officer James Hewitt. Book condemned, but Diana later confirmed she had had an affair with Hewitt and said she adored him.
- Nov. 20, 1995—Princess of Wales gave television interview in which she admitted adultery with Hewitt and said she doubted Charles' ability to handle the responsibility of being king. *Reuters*

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5. Customers can win any of the following prizes on the scheduled draws:
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• 30 winners of P2,000 worth of Free E10 gasoline
Grand Draw: January 15, 2007*
• 36 winners of P2,000 worth of Free E10 gasoline
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• 1 Grand Prize winner of a brand new Honda Civic.
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METRO MANILA NORTH LUZON SOUTH LUZON VISAYAS MINDANAO
Fuel the Change
*Approved by DTI-NCR See posters for details
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3342 Series of 2006

Yunus to banks: Lend to beggars

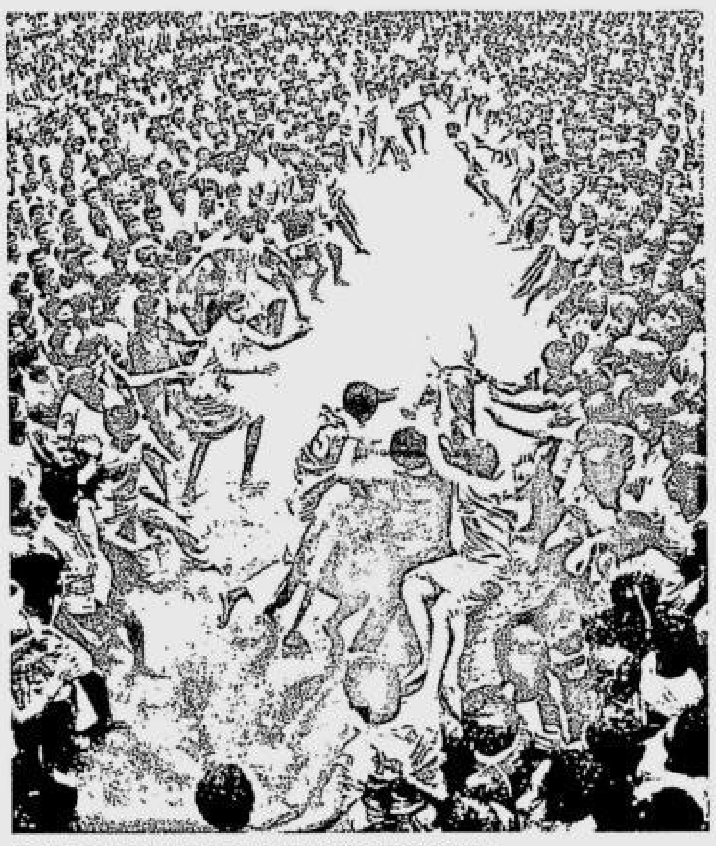
OSLO—WORLD poverty could be consigned to museums if banks and governments stimulate the creative energies of millions of poor people, Muhammad Yunus, the winner of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize, said on Saturday.

Mainstream banks will come under pressure to lend to the poor after the award to Yunus and his Grameen Bank, the pioneer of microcredits, the maverick Bangladeshi predicted.

"Go to the poorest people, even the beggars—we lend money to the beggars," he said. "We have done it. You can do better than we did because you have longer experience."

Yunus will receive the $1.5 million prize with his Grameen Bank, which specializes in microcredits to the poor.

Mainstream banks still have not opened their doors to poorer people and Yunus said they could create specialized microcredit branches or invent new ways to lend. *Reuters*



ONE OF 2006'S STRIKING IMAGES
Indian villagers try to catch a bull during a bull-taming festival in the village of Palamedu, 500 km southwest of the Indian southern city of Chennai, Jan. 15. REUTERS

Kids among UK's top savers

LONDON—CHILDREN ARE among Britain's savviest savers, building up bumper bank accounts for the latest must-have item or Christmas shopping, a survey shows.

Almost 60 percent of children save all their pocket money or at least more than they spend throughout the year, according to the Halifax study. That compares to just a third in 1988.

And, with a quarter of children saving more than 5 pounds per week, they could be gearing up for a bountiful festive spending spree.

Mike Regnier, head of savings at Halifax, said: "Children are capable of saving money and are prepared to save up for Christmas shopping or expensive items that they want.

"It is encouraging that they appear to know the importance of looking after their cash at such an early age." Despite having the lowest weekly income of 24.59 pounds, compared to a UK average of 33.59 pounds, children in the West Midlands are the nation's best savers.

Three-quarters save all their money or more than they spend.

Children in Yorkshire and Humberside are the worst, with just 42 percent saving all or most of their money.

The study also shows that boys and younger children are more inclined to save their cash. *Reuters*

Iraqis bury victims of US air strike

BAGHDAD—ANGRY IRAQI VILLAGERS fired into the air on Saturday as they buried more than a dozen victims of a US air strike that Sunni leaders condemned as a massacre.

Car bombs exploded in cities north and south of the capital, killing 10 people and wounding scores, as US President George W. Bush called on Republicans and Democrats to work together on a new strategy for Iraq.

Underlining the chaos in Iraq, one of Saddam Hussein's nephews, Ayman al-Sabawi, escaped from a prison northwest of the city of Mosul on Saturday.

Sabawi, accused of financing the Sunni insurgency against US forces and the Shiite-led government, escaped with the help of a guard, a senior Mosul police officer told Reuters.

The US military said the air strike Friday on the predominantly Sunni village of Jalameda, near Ishaqi, 90 km north of Baghdad, targeted al-Qaida militants. It said 18 men and two women were killed.

But local officials in Jalameda said there were 17 victims and they included six women and five children. Relatives showed the children's bodies to journalists.

In March, Ishaqi police accused US troops of tying up and shooting to death six adults and five children and then calling in an air strike to destroy the house. An investigation by the US unit involved concluded there was no wrongdoing. *Reuters*

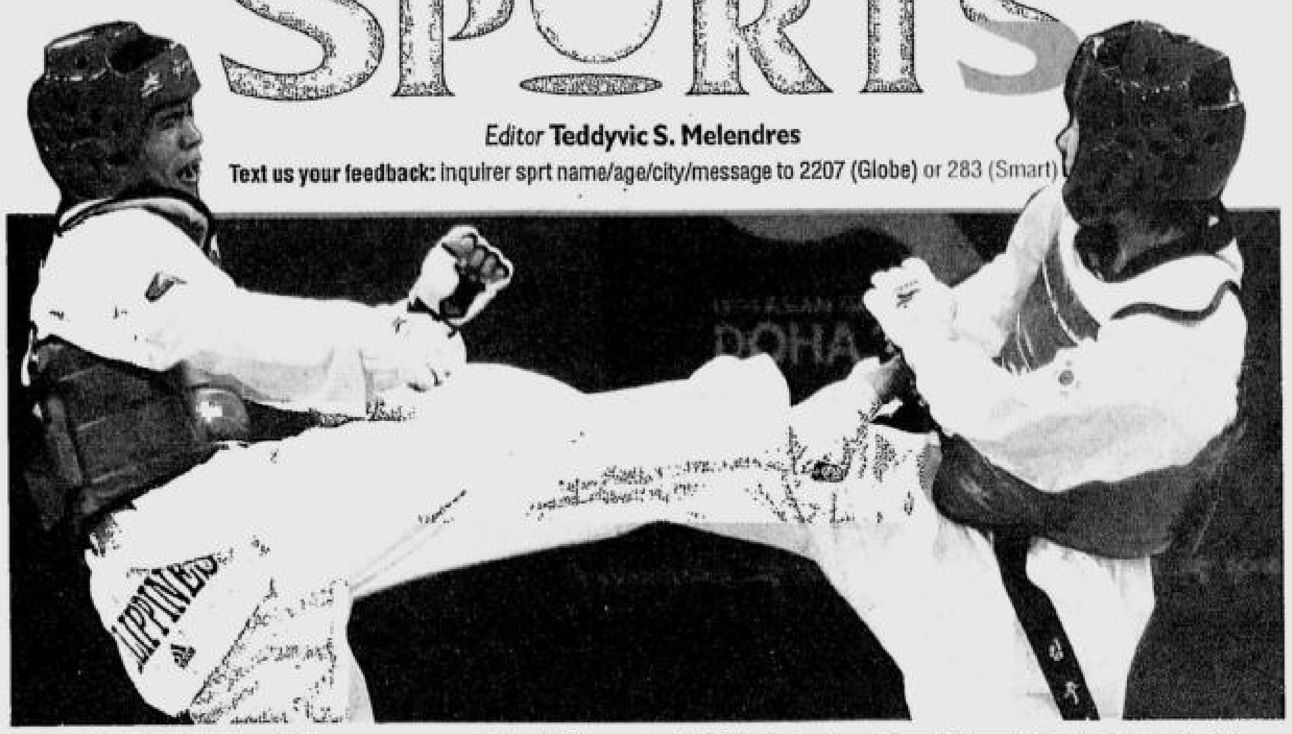
Hidayat beats Lin in badminton final / A34

SPORTS

E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**

Text us your feedback: inquirer sprt name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)



TSHOMLEE GO (left) and Korean opponent Kim Ju Young trade kicks in their gold medal match in taekwondo. Go settled for the silver. LYN RILLON

3 RP boxers fight in semis

By Ted S. Melendres
Sports Editor

DOHA, QATAR—SUPER-SUBSTITUTE LIGHT FLYWEIGHT Godfrey Castro and lightweight Genebert Basadre try to follow Violito Payla into the finals of the boxing competitions when they take on separate foes Monday in the 15th Asian Games.

Castro, who has made an excellent account of himself here despite being a mere replacement to the suspended Harry Tañamor, goes up against the division's heavy favorite, Suban Panon of Thailand, while Basadre takes on flashy Chinese slugger Hu Qing.

Filipino boxing officials are looking forward to the two fights, set at 2 p.m. (7 p.m. in Manila) at the Aspire Hall 5 hall, a portion of the world's biggest dome that holds simultaneous competitions in gymnastics, boxing, cycling and volleyball.

"We will see if Godfrey and Genebert can also advance," said Manny Lopez, the president of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines. "They have skilful opponents in Suban and Hu. But Payla has already validated the soundness of our training regimen."

Payla overwhelmed another Chinese, Yang Bo, and won via RSC-Os (referee stops contest-outscored) one minute and 15 seconds into the third round of their semifinal encounter yesterday.

The Asian Games website has also scheduled the semifinals of the bantamweight division today with Filipino Joan Tipon meeting Petchkoom Worapoj of Thailand.

The highly trained wushu players and artists join the Asiad fray for the first time with Rene Catalan plunging into action in the men's 52-kilogram preliminaries and Eduard Floyang competing in the 70 kg division.

Filipino delegation officials are hoping that the wushu bets can fill up the void left by the tenpin bowlers who, for the first time in the Asian Games, failed to win a single medal in the six-event competitions for both men and women.

"The wushu players and the boxers could be our only hopes for the gold," said a ranking official who asked not to be named. "I hope wushu also delivers."

The country's hopes in equestrian also resume action at the Equestrian Jumping Arena north of here with Juan Ramon Lanza, Camila Zobel, Danielle Cojuangco and Marie Antonette "Toni" Leviste vying in the second qualifier of the individual jumping competition.

Lanza was the best-placed Filipino after the first qualifier with 4 penalties, and the squad is well-positioned in fifth place to contend for the medals.

The women's sepak takraw squad debuts against the mighty Thais before facing the Viet-

3 RP/A32

RP Sked Dec. 11

Archery—9:45 a.m. Women's Individual Match 7 (Santos Katherine vs INA, Cabral Rachelle Anne vs. BHU

Boxing (Aspire Hall 5) 14:00 Men's Fly – 48kg. Semifinal Castro Godfrey vs. Pannon Suban; Men's Light 60kg. Semifinal Basadre Genebert vs. Hu Qing

Equestrian (Equestrian Jumping Arena) 9:00am. Jumping Individual 2nd Qualifier Lanza Juan Ramon, Zobel Camila Paola Cojuangco Danielle, Leviste Marie Antonette

Sepak Takraw (Al Sadd Indoor Hall) 9:00am. Women's Double Preliminary Match 1 RP vs Thailand; Men's Double Preliminary Match 2 RP vs Kor; Men's Double Preliminary Match 5 RP vs Ind; Women's Double Preliminary Match 7 Phi vs Vie

Wushu (Aspire Hall 3) 15:30 Men's 52kg. Preliminary Catalan Rene Sornito vs Hudoyarov Utkir Men's 70kg. Preliminary Folayang Eduard vs Ahmed Ijaz

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Gaga blows gold bid with costly blunder

By Ted S. Melendres
Sports Editor

DOHA, QATAR—ANTONIO Gabica looked beyond the table and into nothingness as Satoshi Kawabata easily pocketed the 7 ball. There was nothing he could do now but wait until the 8 and the 9 fall as well, and it would be all over.

Gabica's grievous error in the 12th rack made him cringe in his seat. It was a blunder that Kawabata was now still feeding on, and both men knew that was the turning point. The Japanese cashed in, winning three straight racks to get to the hill.

When the 9 ball fell, Kawabata looked up and raised both hands, then shook the Filipino's hand. Final score: 9-7

Gabica, so close to victory, bowed to the Japanese in the final match of the 8-ball event Saturday and settled for the silver medal, only the RP contingent's third in a victory-starved campaign in the 15th Asian Games here.

"That was a really big mistake," said the 34-year-old Cebuano after the match that lasted a little more than three hours. "I should have hit the 8 ball harder."

Ahead, 7-5, Gabica hit the 8 ball soft and missed the pocket, eliciting oohs from a gallery that included fellow Filipino athletes and officials of the country's delegation at the Al-Sadd Multi-Purpose Hall near the city center.

Kawabata cleaned up and then took the next rack in the winner-breaks format to pull even, 7-7. Gabica never stood up until the match was over.

"If [Gabica] had hit a stronger shot, he would have won," said the 36-year-old Japanese from Osaka. "He made a soft shot, that's why he missed. I got to 7-6 and it was a big point in the game."

Gabica took an early two racks-to-one lead and won twice more to stretch it to 4-1. The way to the gold seemed smooth, despite a couple of errors that allowed Kawabata to return to the table and get his fair share of the next six racks, 7-4.

Then came Gabica's stunning miscalculation on the 8 ball.

"I felt so tired I had a mental block," he said. "I felt even more tired and dizzy thinking about that mistake. In 8-ball, it's so hard if you make a mistake. One small mistake and you're done.

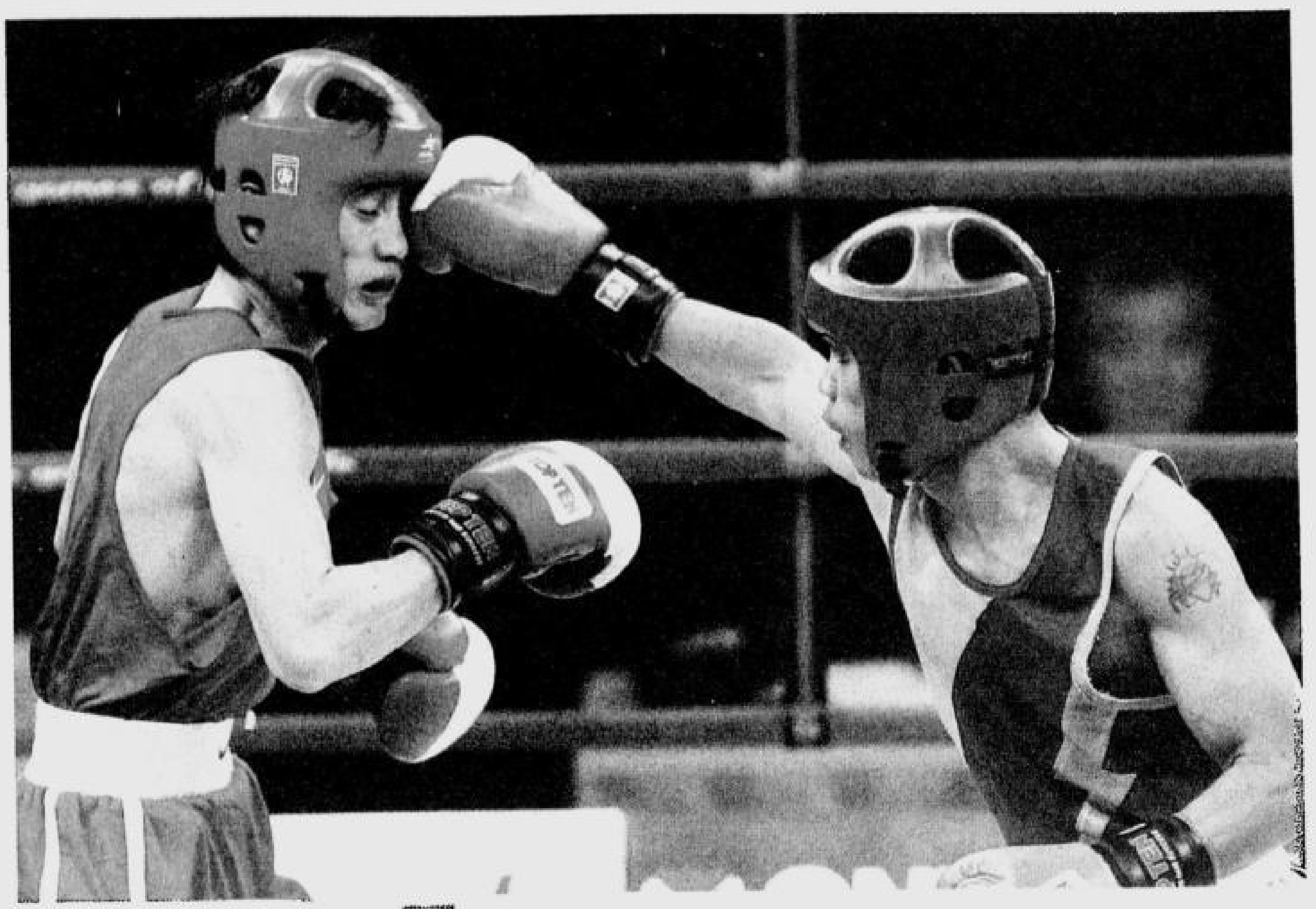
"I tried very hard to get the gold but I think it's really for him [Kawabata]," he added.

Leonardo Andam, who lost to Kawabata four hours earlier in the semifinals, 6-9, yielded to Chinese Taipei's Huang Kunchang in the battle for the bronze, 9-5.

Unlike in boxing or taekwondo, the losing semifinalists in cue sports dispute the bronze medal.

Hung was the same man Gabica beat in a four-hour final four encounter, 9-7. The Filipino came back from 1-5 down to win and set up the final with Kawabata.

"Last night I only had four hours sleep because I was too excited," Gabica said. "This time, I will have a full eight-hour sleep to prepare for the 9-ball matches."



FLYWEIGHT Violito Payla lands a solid punch to the face of China's Wang Bo that left the latter reeling in their 51 kg boxing semifinals. Payla advances to the final. LYN RILLON

3 RP boxers fight in semis

From page A31

namese in a double preliminary match. The men take on the South Koreans first before tackling the Indonesians.

Meanwhile, ranged against world champions from South Korea, Filipino archers didn't have much of a chance.

Rachelle Anne Cabral was the best RP finisher in the women's individual qualification round with 1262 Fita points, good for 20th place in the event dominated by the South Koreans who finished 1-2-3-4.

Park Sung-hyun, a member of her country's winning team in the last world championships in Madrid, took the gold with 1339 with Yu Ok-hee nailing the silver with 1335 and Lee Tuk-young bagging the bronze with 1323.

Annalyn Katherine Santos wound up in 29th place with 1231 followed in 32nd by the veteran Jasmin Figueroa (1229) and Karen Grace Yasi (1159).

Over at the Equestrian Jumping Arena, west of Dubai, Juan Ramon Lanza guided his mount Don't Cry for Me to a tie for sixth place with 13 other riders on 4 penalties after the first individual qualifying round of equestrian's jumping event.

The top three places belonged to Arabs on board the finest Arabian horses.

Danielle Cojuangco (Kidit Saint Clair) and Marie Antonette Leviste (Globe Platinum Just J) had 8 penalties each to be in a 10-rider logjam for 20th place, 27 rungs higher than the fourth and last Filipino in the field, Camila Paola Zobel (Hamonie Du Roc), who barely averted elimination with 31 penalties.

The event, won in the 2002 Busan Asiad by the semi-retired Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski, had five riders with zero penalty, led by Saudi Arabia's Khaled Al Eid, the United Arab Emirates' Sheikha Al Maktour and Qatar's Ali Yousif Ahmad Al Rumaihi.

In the team battle, the Philippines shared fifth spot with Malaysia with 20 penalties. Saudi Arabia led with 4, followed by South Korea with eight, UAE 12 and Qatar 12.

Sixth seed Cecil Mamiit yielded a set to Japan's Toshide Matsui before advancing to the men's singles quarterfinals with a 6-2, 3-6, 6-1 decision. He was the only Filipino survivor in yesterday's action at the Khalifa complex here.

Eric Taino forced Chinese Taipei's second seed Lu Yen-hsun to a tiebreaker in the first set but was never a factor after that in a 6-7 (1-7), 2-6 defeat; Czarina Mae Arevalo lost to Uzbekistan's Iroda Tulyaganova, 1-6, 1-6; and Denise Dy bowed to Busan Asiad silver medalist Tamarine Tanasugarn of Thailand, 4-6, 5-7.

None of the fencers advanced to the quarterfinals as Gian Carlo Nocom lost all his duels and brought up the rear in his seven-man group in men's individual sabre, Walbert Mendoza finished fourth with three wins in his group of the same event, and Melly Joyce Angeles won twice in five matches to end up fifth in women's epee.

In golf, Michael Bibat moved into contention I in the individual division after a 67 that lifted him into a three-way tie for fifth at 209.

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2006 ASIAN GAMES MEDAL TALLY AS OF DEC 10, 2006; 9:26 PM

Nation	G	S	B	Total	Nation	G	S	B	Total
China	103	59	31	193	Indonesia	2	2	7	11
Japan	34	41	48	123	Syria	2	0	2	4
South Korea	27	33	57	117	Vietnam	1	6	6	13
Kazakhstan	15	10	27	52	UAE	1	3	1	5
Taiwan	7	4	14	25	Jordan	1	1	1	3
India	6	11	11	28	Lebanon	1	0	2	3
Thailand	6	10	17	33	Tajikistan	1	0	2	3
North Korea	5	7	10	22	Myanmar	0	3	4	7
Qatar	5	7	5	17	Philippines	0	3	2	5
Hong Kong	4	7	5	16	Kyrgyzstan	0	1	2	3
Malaysia	4	6	5	15	Iraq	0	1	1	2
Bahrain	4	5	3	12	Turkmenistan	0	1	0	1
Saudi Arabia	4	0	3	7	Pakistan	0	1	0	1
Singapore	3	3	9	15	Sri Lanka	0	1	0	1
Kuwait	3	3	1	7	Nepal	0	0	2	2
Uzbekistan	3	0	8	11	Afghanistan	0	0	1	1
Iran	2	8	4	14	Bangladesh	0	0	1	1
Mongolia	2	3	2	7	Macau	0	0	1	1

SPORTSWATCH

Filter Kings edge Gold Gears

TERENCE TANG SIZZLED WITH 21 POINTS AS THE MIGHTY FILTER KINGS outsteadied the Bulacan State University Gold Gears during an exhibition game recently at the Valencia Hall of the BSU in Malolos City. A former Xavier standout, Tang connived with Jean Alabanza and Sam Gulayan in the fourth quarter to finally unnerve the stubborn Gold Gears. The match, witnessed by a huge roaring crowd, was part of the university's series of activities to highlight its 102nd anniversary. While Alabanza and Gulayan provided the muscle underneath, Wowie Evangelista and Rowel Asay supplied the needed firepower for the Mighty Filter Kings by combining for 23 points.

SJC 4-cock derby on

BIG-TIME COCKFIGHTING RETURNS TO THE SAN JUAN COLISEUM TODAY with the holding of a special 4-cock derby starting at 5 p.m. with more than 70 fights on tap. No less than P300,000 in guaranteed prize awaits the winners for an entry fee of only P11,000. Invited by hosts Johnny Yu and Louie Cua are leading cockers of Metro Manila and other provinces. Meanwhile, SJC's Christmas Rambulan 6–cock derby starts on Saturday, Dec. 16, featuring the 3-cock elimination round. For details, call 7255369 and 7256563 or 0917–8264018.

P3M Makati derby starts

MAKATI COLISEUM'S PAMASKONG SALPUKAN 6- COCK DERBY, WITH A staggering P3 million at stake, starts todaywith some 70 matches lined up. As bonus, each three pointer in the elims will share in the P100,000 daily prize. Cockers and breeders who want to join may still field an entry on Dec. 13, 16, 18, 20 and 23. Two days of championship rounds are slated on Dec. 27 and 30. For more info, please call please call 896 -3545 and 895 -6475.

Roligon 'Apordabol' Round 3 up

THE THIRD BATCH OF COMPETITORS PLUNGE INTO ACTION TODAY IN Roligon Mega Cockpit's Apordabol Incredibol 5-cock derby. The first of 80 fights takes off at 4 p.m. Twenty-seven participants with two wins each from a big field of 261 have already advanced to the finals on Dec. 13. Among the newest qualifiers are Sam Mendoza (Cainta 4-cock Dec. 29), Madison Go (Master of the Ring), Mayor Buddy Robregado (Katrina), Rey Briones, Pol Derpo, Joseph Chua, Boy Jalandoni, Arman Garcia, Tony Mendoza, Tony Jaen, Roger del Guzman and Danny Lim For more details, please call 851-2275; 833-1638 and 852-9812.

Catalan, Morales rip nat'l cycling records

By Ted S. Melendres

DOHA, QATAR—ALFIE CATALAN AND JAN PAUL Morales shattered a pair of national records and wound up as the best-placed Southeast Asians in their respective events in the tough track cycling competition of the 15th Asian Games Sunday.

Catalan clocked four minutes and 48.275 seconds in finishing 14th in the individual pursuit at the sleek, retractable velodrome of the vast Sports City here. That clip ripped the old RP mark of 4:55.66 set by Ronald Gorantes in the 2002 World Cup in Kunming, China.

The 20-year-old Morales settled for seventh place with a time of 1:08.422 in the men's 1-kilometer time trial but not before surpassing the old national mark of 1:09.30 posted by Wilson Blas in the same World Cup races.

The winner of the gold medal in the same event in last year's Southeast Asian Games, Catalan ended up 0.402 of a second off Kazakhstan's Berik Kepushov, the 12th and last finalist.

"Alfie worked hard for that record and it was a good race for him," head coach Jomel Lorenzo said in Filipino. "We are happy that he achieved the record here. The strong competition helped a lot."

Catalan, a 24-year-old nephew of former Marlboro Tour champion Armando Catalan from Asingan, Pangasinan, lapped Iraq's Mihsien Reauf twice in their head-to-head race over four kilometers.

South Korea's Jang Sun-jae, a member of the team that finished fourth in the men's team trial in the road races, turned in the fastest time of 4:30.355 and led the qualifiers.

Japan's Taiji Nishitani came next with 4:36.763 followed by another Korean, Hwang In-hyeok (4:37.76).

Meanwhile, the president of the Union Cycliste Internatuinal (UCI) has asked the Philippines to host the 2007 Asian Cycling Championships.

Pat McQuaid, who spent five years in Manila to transform the then Marlboro Tour into an international event, said Dubai was supposed to host the event next summer but begged off because of security problems.

"We are hoping that the Philippines would agree because I know very well that cycling is very close to the Filipinos' hearts," McQuaid told officials of PhilCycling here.

HARRY Dagmil completes his long jump attempt, nailing a distance of 7.76m on the way to a fifth-place finish in athletics. LYN RILLON

Realtors crush Dragons; Phone Pals win

By Musong R. Castillo

STA. LUCIA BOOSTED ITS OUTRIGHT SEMIfinal bid in the Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup with a 98-82 victory over Welcoat last night at the Cuneta Astrodome in Pasay.

Dennis Espino scored 17 points and helped key a telling Sta. Lucia run in the third period as the Realtors arrested a three-game slide to improve to 10-6 and keep an automatic final four berth within reach.

Talk 'N Text held off a furious Air21 finish later for a 124-119 victory that put the Phone Pals in the quarterfinals.

Ren-Ren Ritualo capped a 25-point night with a triple going into the final minute which snuffed the last of numerous Air21 fightbacks, 120-114.

The Phone Pals jumped to 9-7 while the Express dropped to 7-9 and are in danger of being dragged into the wild card phase.

Jimmy Alapag was also awesome for the Phone Pals, finishing with 14 assists and seven steals.

GAMES WEDNESDAY (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:35 p.m—Welcoat vs San Miguel
7:20 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs Purefoods

The Express came within 114-117 after charities by Arwind Santos and Gary David heading into the final 70 seconds.

But Ritualo drained that trey, and Alapag had the last of his steals in breaking up an Air21 fastbreak that led to two Asi Taulava free throws for 122-114, 41.4 to go.

"We needed this win badly," Sta. Lucia coach Alfrancis Chua said. "If we can win our last two games against Ginebra and Coke, I think we might have a chance."

The Realtors opened up cold, trailing the Dragons by four after the first 12 minutes before picking up steam the rest of the way to eventually deal cellar-dwelling Welcoat an eighth straight loss in a 3-13 slate

Kenneth Duremdes, winner of the MVP award in 1998 while with Alaska, led the Realtors with 18 points, while Nelbert Omolon contributed 16 points.

Rookie Kelly Williams, Alex Cabagnot and Paolo Mendoza all chipped in double digit scores and combined for another 32 markers for the Realtors, who took control with a 69-54 lead after three quarters.

The scores:

First Game

STA. LUCIA 98—Duremdes 18, Espino 17, Omolon 16, Williams 11, Cabagnot 11, Mendoza 10, Aquino 7, Isip 3, Gonzales 3, Catli 2, Calimag 0.

WELCOAT 82—Reyes 19, Gelig 12, Sta. Maria 12, Mente 12, Cabatu 10, Lo-pez 9, Lao 8, Sagad 0, Ba-gulon 0.

Quarters: 22-25; 46-42; 69-54; 98-92.

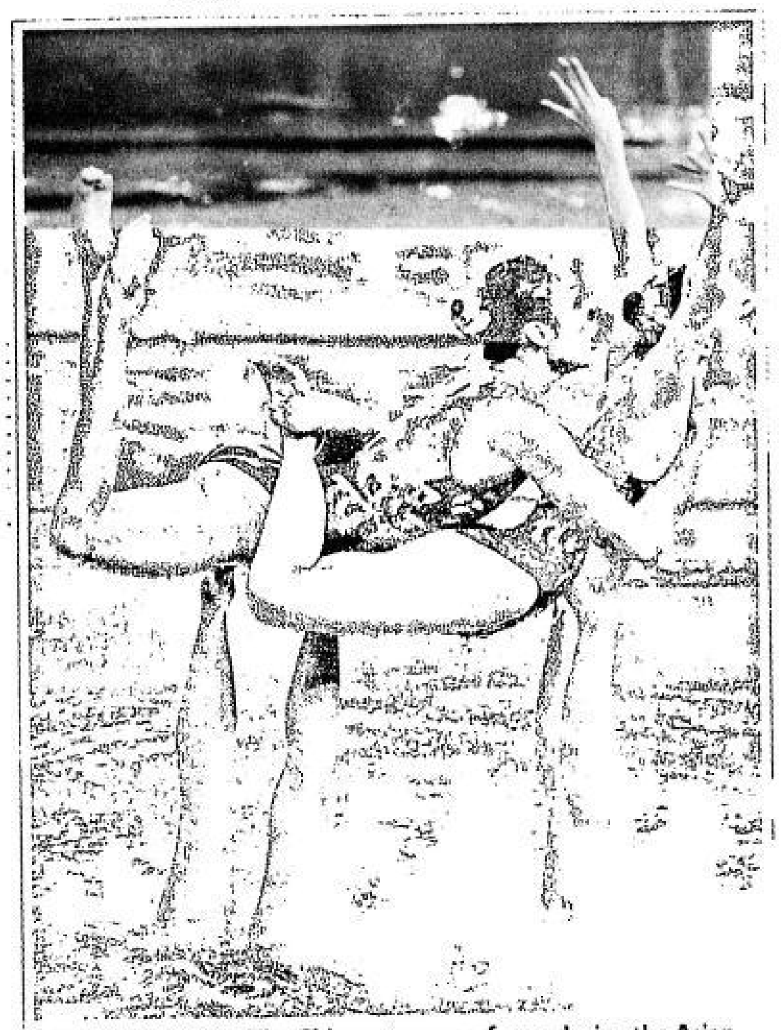
Second Game

TALK 'N TEXT 124—Ritualo 25, Cardona 20, Allado 17, Washington 16, Taulava 14, Alapag 12, Pablo 8, Belano 8, Santos 2, Noble 2, Fran 0.

AIR 21 119—David 25, Y. de Ocampo 17, R. de Ocampo 16, Santos 13, Arboleda 13, Canaleta 12, Dimaunahan 11, Telan 10, Avenido 2, Sotto 0, Billiones 0.

Quarters: 35-26, 62-49, 93-80, 124-119.

Eagle Ridge reclaims Sta. Lucia Cup



SYNCHRONIZED: The Chinese team performs during the Asian Games Synchronized Swimming free routine team final in Doha on the way to winning the gold medal. AP

Standings: Eagle Ridge 170, Palos Verdes 165, Alta Vista 155, Lakewood 91, Summit Point 77, Royale Tagaytay 75, Orchard 51, Caliraya Springs 16

WITH ITS BACK AGAINST THE WALL, EAGLE Ridge found the right men to pull off a blistering comeback and reclaim the Sta. Lucia Golf Tour overall championship after dominating the final two rounds on Friday and Saturday.

The Eagle Ridge bets amassed a whopping 78 points in the last 36 holes it co-hosted with Orchard to overtake its rivals from the south, Rancho Palos Verdes of Davao and Cebu's Alta Vista.

Eagle Ridge went 2-of-3 in each of the last two legs, topping Groups 2 and 3 plus a third place finish at Orchard and put the icing on the cake by winning Groups 1 and 3 to make up for a fifth place showing in Group 2.

When the final tally came out for all the three legs with the three stops in Luzon counted as one, Eagle Ridge emerged on top with 170 points against the 165 of Palos Verdes and the 155 of Alta Vista to reclaim the Sta. Lucia Cup.

Eagle Ridge won for the fifth time in eight stagings of the nationwide series for clubs belonging to the Sta. Lucia family.

Lakewood settled for fourth at 91, Summit Point finished at 77, Royale Tagaytay 75, Orchard 51 and Caliraya Springs 16.

The tour team winners were Alta Vista (Enrico Solon, Dennis Canoy, Victor Gocela, Agapito Suan Jr.) in Group 1, Palos Verdes (Ronald Galicia, Jaime Tan Jr. and Victor Co) in Group 2 and Royale Tagaytay (Norberto Badenas, Jose Mendoza, Francisco Suzara and Nelson Chua) in Group 3.

The individual champions were Matias Aznar IV of Alta Vista in Class A, Dennis Canoy in Class B, Sim Ho Sak of Lakewood in Class C and Timothy Brodeth of Palos Verdes in Class D.

Palos Verdes and Cebu went into the last two days of play sharing the lead at 98 points with the Davaoeños catching up after the Summit Point leg. But Palos made only 32 at Orchard and 35 at Eagle while Orchard got just 25 at Orchard and 32 at Eagle.

The crucial round for Eagle Ridge came at Orchard where they overpowered the field by winning 42 out of a possible 45 first-place points.

Valencia five forges sudden death with North Cotabato

DAVAO CITY—MAYOR JOSE GALARIO Jr.'s Valencia Golden Harvest pulled off an 82-78 shocker over third seed North Cotabato Saturday to stay alive in their quarterfinal series in the 2006 Spring Cooking Oil-NBC National Cup basketball tournament at the RMC gym here.

After trailing for most of the first quarter, Golden Harvest went to tall men Nat Cruz and Buboy Berami to stall the semifinal bid of Gov. Manny Pinol's Braves.

The 6-foot-7 Cruz and 6-4 Berami combined for 36 points as Golden Harvest grabbed a 39-36 lead at halftime and never looked back.

With the win, Valencia forced a do-or-die game with North Cobatabo for a semifinal slot at presstime last night.

The winner earns the right to face Spring-Tagaytay.

Spring-Tagaytay became the league's first semifinalist by blasting Osmeña-Cebu, 67-51, Friday in Game 3 of their quarterfinal series in Manila.

North Cotabato, which finished with a 6-3 record in the classification round, tried to rally behind ex-pros Henry Fernandez and Tony Espinosa but its bid fell short.

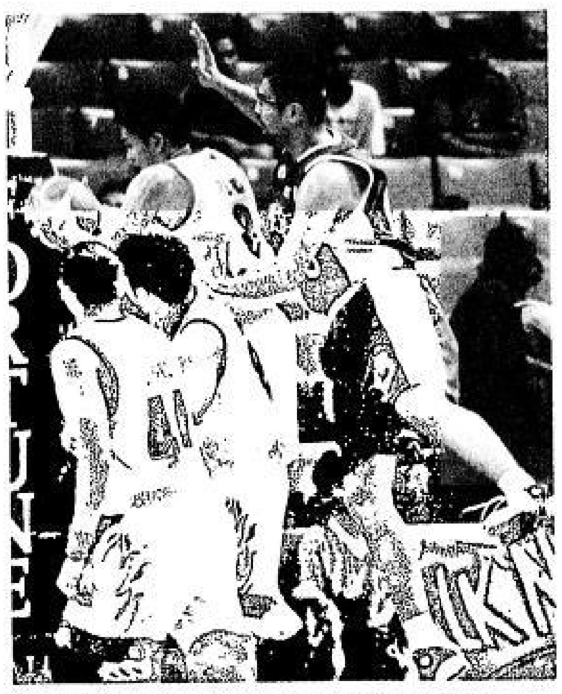
Cruz and Berami led Valencia 4-5, in the classification, with 19 and 17 points, respectively.

The scores:

VALENCIA 82—Cruz 19, Berami 17, Adams 14, Dragon 6, Celiz 6, Navales 5, Braga 5, Cesar 4, Clavel 2.

NORTH COTABATO 78—Jawod 19, Fernandez 15, Espinosa 16, Tamayo 7, Manalac 5, Clar 4, Tanigue 4, Etrata 2, Cabanog 0, Dagatan 0.

Quarters: 20-21, 39-36, 59-53, 82-78.



JAY-R Reyes (No. 8) of Welcoat beats out Sta. Lucia veteran Marlou Aquino to the rebound. *PBA story on A24.* RODEL ROTONI

Doping case hits Asiad

DOHA, QATAR—WEIGHTLIFTER Than Kyi Kyi of Myanmar tested positive to a banned diuretic and was the first athlete disqualified for doping at the 15th Asian Games.

Olympic Council of Asia director general Husain Al Musallam announced the positive case Saturday against the former world championship gold medalist.

Than, 28, placed fourth in the women's 48-kilogram division at Doha last weekend, the first day of weightlifting competition, and was tested the same day.

Than waived her right to have a B sample tested after her initial urine sample showed elevated traces of the diuretic furosemide, Al Musallam said.

Diuretics are on the list of banned substances because they can be used to mask illegal steroids.

"After due consideration and after listening to her submission, the OCA disciplinary commission recommended that this athlete has committed an anti-doping violation and should be disqualified from the competition," Musallam said.

Than won a gold medal in the snatch in the 46-kilogram class at the 1997 world championships in Chang Mai, Thailand and was a silver medalist at the Southeast Asian Games last year in Manila.

Ranked sixth in the world rankings at the end of 2005, she was one of 40 athletes from Myanmar at the games. *AP*

World's biggest derby kicks off next month

THE FIRST LEG OF THE 2007 World Slasher Cup Invitational 8-Cock Derby, hailed as the "Olympics of Cockfighting," will be held at the Araneta Coliseum on January 16, 18 & 20.

The three-day event is billed as the biggest cock-fighting event in the world and draws the participation of the country's top gamefowl breeders as well as invited masters cockers from the United States.

Among the participants expected to join this year's derby are Ronnie Puno, Gerry Espina, Patrick Antonio, Ito Ynares, Boyet Joson, Frank Berin, Gerry Ramos, Rudy Albano, Frankie Uy, Pol Estrellado, Boy Royo, Jun and Rudy Jingco, Joel and Jet Fernando, Madlambayan bros., John Capinpin, Ruel Feliciano, Gerry Escalona, JV Magsaysay, Tony Tan, Tony Marfori and Jesry Palmares.

Foreign participants include Roger Roberts of Georgia (World Slasher champion 2001), Joe Stanfield of California, Johnny Philips of Georgia, Speedy of Gonzales and Dr. Toti Morales of California, Richard Lanier of Florida, Joey Melendres of Australia, Roy Miñoza and Ric Cabullos of Canada, JC Smith of Florida, Dr. Henry Fajardo of California, Kali and Bobby Casco of Hawaii, Noriaki Morita of Japan and Goi Goitia of California and many others.

The World Slasher is a traditional event hosted by Pintakasi of Champions.

Weight limits for all entries are a minimum of 1.9 kg and maximum of 2.5 kg. Computerized blind matching will be strictly enforced for all fights, whose rules shall be governed by the derby rules of the Araneta Coliseum as duly approved by the Gamefowl Division of the Games and Amusement Board.

For more details log on www.aranetacoliseum.com and www.ticketnet.com.ph and for inquiries please call 911-2928 or 911-3101 local 8361 or 8351 and look for Boy San Pedro and Dong Lamoste.

Why Boom Boom is not yet a Pacquiao

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

THERE'S AN AMAZING SIMILARITY IN the way they feast on their foes.

The native lust of poor boys, who had been very hungry, often whistled in their punishing punches.

However, there are crucial details that should properly separate Manny Pacquiao from Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista.

This is not to pinch off the man from the boy, but there definitely is a whole world of difference between the immediate fight worlds where these two Filipino boxing heroes have excelled.

A sampler: While Bautista was clearly fed a clown in his last outing—with no assurance whatsoever that his next assignment would not be either a preacher or a barber—Pacquiao is regularly exposed to awesome, man-size tests.

***

Look, it was only the dry shell of Erik Morales which Pacquiao had to crush in Las Vegas last month. But Pacman, nevertheless, had to come up with his best in order to prevail in his third meeting with the Mexican boxing great.

The happy thing with Bautista is that, young as he is, he has already been installed as the next big thing in Philippine boxing.

Self-styled experts, together with overjoyed handlers, have started peddling Bautista as the next Manny Pacquiao.

This is not very surprising because, with his devastating conquest of the outmatched Giovanni Andrade in Florida last week, Bautista loomed large as though he was just one crushed rib away from the world championship.

***

Bautista's delicious knockout wins continued to be received with wide-eyed delight by fans.

But there, certainly, is another way of looking at Bautista's prodigious rise.

In fact, there is this urgent call from seasoned fight hands who suggest that it's about time they pulled the power-punching boy away from his worn-out walker—"alisin na sa andador."

There's the suspicion that Bautista had been coddled like a toddler.

The clamor is to stop feeding him patsies.

Of course, there's also the likelihood that, with his inborn gift and vast power, Bautista could've had succeeded in reducing his victims into hapless phonies.

***

You're free to buy that or not.

Still, there are Bautista defenders who would readily insist that the boy wonder of RP boxing should not be rushed.

Not yet, anyway.

The truth is: what we've been seeing here may not even be half of the big hero in the Bohol Bomber.

So when are we going to see the real Bautista? Of Boom Boom in full bloom?

Next year, in the main bout of the RP-Mexico boxing World Cup which sports patron cum laude Tony Aldeguer has reportedly offered to host in Cebu?

With Aldeguer calling the shots, that boxing fiesta is ensured of sensational success this early.

***

Anyway, all told, there's also this lingering feeling that Bautista has become too good to be true.

Yes, Bautista, a work still in progress, has started to be celebrated like a priceless masterpiece.

With his enviable display of poise and power punching, there's very little reason to doubt he could, indeed, be the next great one in RP boxing.

Meanwhile, there should be a serious effort to prevent the ineptness and inferiority of Bautista's host of foes from exceeding and blanketing the real great gifts in Boom Boom.

He must be celebrated not because of the insignificance of his victims, but instead on the grandness and toughness of his foes.

You know, just like in the case of Manny Pacquiao.

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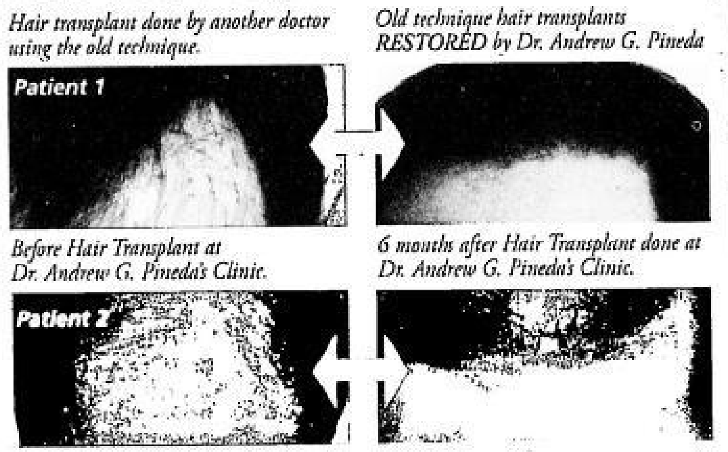

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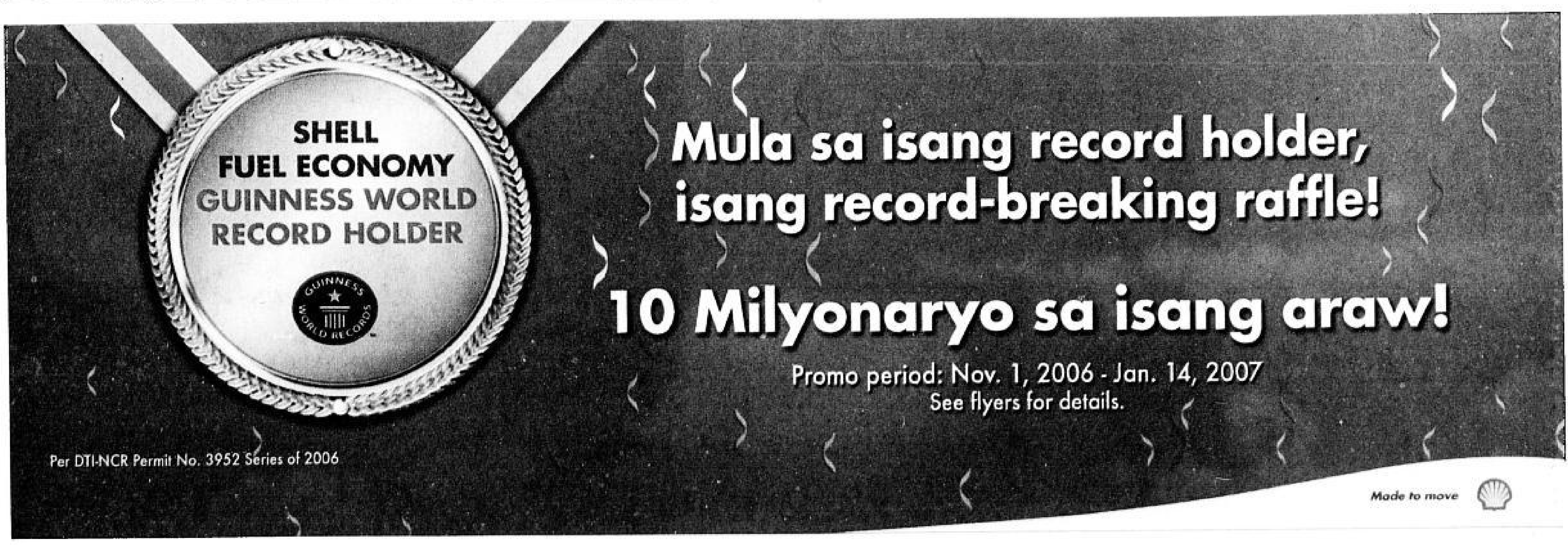
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Made to move

Hidayat has last word on rivalry vs Lin

DOHA—OLYMPIC CHAMPION TAUFIK Hidayat scored sweet revenge over arch-rival Lin Dan, 21-15, 22-20, on Saturday, beating the world No. 1 to lift the Asian Games badminton singles title.

Hong Kong's Wang Chen won the women's final, defeating teammate Yip Pui Yin, 21-14, 22-20, for the territory's first Asian Games badminton title.

Hidayat overcame some second game nerves to beat the Chinese star in a tense match in front of a cheering, flag-waving Indonesian crowd.

After securing the first game and, 17-20, down in the second, he saved three game points to take the title, sending the crowd into a screaming frenzy.

"I lost in the team event and it was playing on my mind. I wanted to win the first game for sure. He was fast in the second game and I wanted to stay with him and with endurance I did," said the Indonesian star.

The defending champion said his personal rivalry with Lin did not have an impact on the game, and he offered an olive branch of sorts.

"I never speak to him because I don't speak Mandarin and he doesn't speak Indonesian. But we are OK," the seventh seed said in English.

"Everything is OK, I think maybe the media blows these things up."

INDONESIAN Taufik Hidayat (right) waves from the podium while his main rival Lin Dan of China looks away during the awarding ceremony. AFP

Lin and the bronze medalists declined to attend the post-match news conference, where the world champion would have sat alongside Hidayat, prompting the Indonesian to say with a grin: "Ask him why he didn't show up."

Tensions have been simmering between the two since Hidayat launched an astonishing personal attack on Lin last Friday saying he was arrogant and unfriendly.

The comments backfired spectacularly on Hidayat with the 25-year-old losing twice to Lin in the team competition, both times in three games.

Lin conceded that Hidayat had played the better match, and he was feeling the pressure in the second game.

"Taufik played much better than I expected," he said.

"When I was leading 20-17 I felt I wanted to win so much. That's why I lost eventually."

South Korea's Lee Hyun Il and Malaysia's Lee Chong Wei won bronze.

Wang took the women's title as Hong Kong scored a spectacular first ever Asiad badminton gold.

Wang, 30, won bronze at Busan four years ago which until now was Hong Kong's best achievement in the sport.

The 19-year-old Yip appeared nervous early in the match with a string of unforced errors that allowed the more experienced Wang to take the first game.

Yip's desperate diving meant she needed treatment early in the second for a scuffed knee. But the tactic seemed to pay off as she took a 9-3 lead only for Wang to fight back. *AFP*

HIDAYAT clinches his fist after winning the men's singles badminton final against China's Lin Dan. REUTERS

South wins Korean 'war'

Baghdad celebrates football win with gunfire

DOHA, QATAR—SOUTH KOREA BEAT the North and Iraq also scored an emotional Asian Games soccer win Saturday on a day when athlete doping took away some of the luster of the day's legitimately positive results.

The much anticipated match between the two Koreans turned out to be one-sided, with South Korea dominating 3-0 to reverse a 2-0 North Korean win last year at the East Asian Games.

The match came amid talks by both sides aimed at forming a unified team at future sporting events, including the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

Two quarterfinals went to extra time—Iraq beat Uzbekistan 2-1 and defending champions Iran won 8-7 on penalties after the teams were level 2-2 after two extra periods.

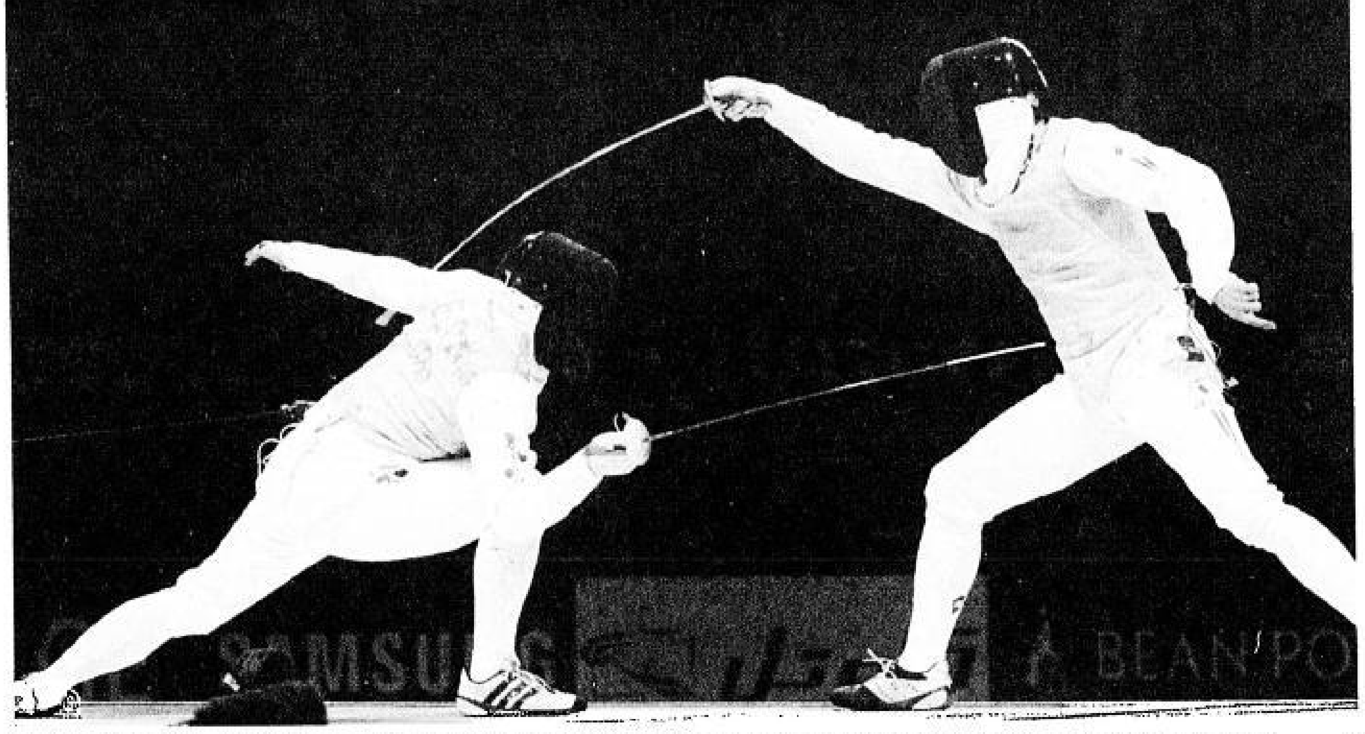
In the other quarterfinal, host Qatar beat Thailand 3-0 to set up Tuesday's semifinals—Iran vs Qatar and Iraq against South Korea.

The Iraqi win prompted celebratory gunfire and cheers in Baghdad. Citizens hailed the victory as a welcome diversion from the daily cycle of sectarian violence.

"We are proud not only of this honorable result, but of the fact that our team represents national unity," Salih Ridha said, noting that the team is composed of Shiites, Sunnis and others.

In the first drug controversy at the 15-day games—and mirroring doping scandals at the last two Olympics—Myanmar's Than Kyi Kyi, a former world championship gold medalist who placed fourth on Dec. 2 in the 48-kilogram class in Doha, tested positive to the banned diuretic furosemide.

Olympic Council of Asia director general Husain Al Musallam announced Than's positive case, saying the weightlifter waived her right to have a B sample tested after her initial urine sample taken on the day she competed showed elevated traces of furosemide.



JAPAN'S Yuki Ota (right) thrusts foil to South Korea's Lee Cheon-woong during the fencing men's individual foil final. AP

Diuretics are on the list of banned substances because they can be used to mask illegal steroids.

"After due consideration and after listening to her submission, the OCA disciplinary commission recommended that this athlete has committed an anti-doping violation and should be disqualified from the competition," Musallam said.

The Asiad has 10,500 athletes, the biggest of any games outside the Olympics.

At the Winter Olympics in Turin, Italy, in February, Austrian cross-country skiers and biathletes were subjects of doping raids by the Italian authorities and investigations by the IOC. Russian biathlon star Olga Pyleva was kicked out of the games and stripped of a silver medal after a drug test revealed a banned stimulant.

At the Athens Olympics in 2004, 22 athletes tested positive for banned substances or for violating anti-doping regulations. And two of Greece's highest-profile athletes—sprinters Kostas Kenteris and Katerina Thanou—were nabbed for failing to show up for pre-games tests.

In the glamour 100-meter sprints here at the athletics stadium Saturday, Saudi Arabia's Yahya Hassan Habeeb won the men's race in 10.32 seconds and Kazakhstan's Guzel Khubbieva took the women's in 11.27.

China's gold count, helped by a win in the women's marathon by Zhou Chunxiu and two wins in track cycling, moved past the 100 mark on the eighth day of the games, nearly 70 more than second-place Japan.

With seven days of competition left, it is possible for China to break its previous record of golds in an Asian Games—150—that it established four years ago in Busan, South Korea. *AP*

Tennis: Li, Mirza rip foes, reach last eight

DOHA—CHINESE TOP SEED LI NA AND INdian favorite Sania Mirza cruised into the Asian Games quarterfinals of the women's singles on Sunday and declared themselves fighting fit.

Li took just 56 minutes to dispose of Indonesia's Sandy Gumulya, 6-1, 6-3, despite her left ankle needing heavy strapping during the match.

Li, who made history at Wimbledon this year when she became the first Chinese woman to reach the quarterfinals of a Grand Slam, said she strained it during an earlier match, but it would not hurt her performance here.

"It's not bothering me," she said.

The world No. 21 meets Uzbekistan's Iroda Tulyaganova in the quarters, but said her major threat to winning gold came from teammate Zheng Jie.

"I'm taking one game at a time rather than thinking about the finals but China is my main competition," she said.

Zheng, a doubles Grand Slam winner, also moved into the final eight after India's number two Shikha Uberoi retired hurt.

Teammate Mirza, who has drawn large flag-waving Indian crowds to the Khalifa Courts, was little troubled by South Korea's Yoo Mi winning, 6-1, 6-4.

"This is going to be a tough competition but I'm hitting the ball well and I'm feeling fit," said Mirza, adding that she had plenty of energy despite backing up from Sunday's team final loss against Taiwan.

Third seed Aiko Nakamura from Japan walked over South Korea's Kim Jin Hee, 6-2, 6-2, while 2002 Asian Games silver medalist Tamarine Tanasugarn had a tougher time against Denise Dy of the Philippines, 6-4, 7-5.

Taiwan's Chan Yung Jan is the other player through, defeating Vietnam's Ngo Viet Ha, 6-1, 6-1. *AFP*

China needs to be more dominant for Beijing '08

DOHA—CHINESE ATHLETES are dominating the Asian Games but need to step up a level if they want to do the same at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Chinese sports leaders say.

With the Asiad past the halfway mark, the Chinese juggernaut has taken almost half the gold medals on offer but their performances have generally fallen a notch below world-class standards.

"Though we have gained a lot of gold medals, very few of the performances have been of truly high international standard," said Duan Shijie, China's deputy sports minister.

China led the medal count with 103 golds to 34 for Japan and 27 for South Korea at the start of the ninth day of competition on Sunday.

Four years ago in Busan, China ended with 150 to 96 for the South Korean hosts and 44 for Japan.

On the whole, sports leaders are pleased with the performances of the Chinese athletes here and encouraged by the younger members of the delegation.

"Most of our athletes have performed very well and gained outstanding results," Duan said, noting a trio of women's weightlifting world records and good results in swimming, shooting, table tennis, gymnastics, judo and taekwondo.

"Our rivals are fierce and our own players have gained experience. Why should we not be satisfied."

The Chinese delegation is already analyzing results from the Games with just under a week still remaining to determine how best to prepare their competitors for the Beijing Olympics. *AFP*

Gold medalist hits taekwondo referees

DOHA—IRANIAN YUSSEF KARAMI HAS slammed what he called unfair refereeing after he spoiled South Korea's taekwondo party at the Asian Games.

The 23-year-old Olympic bronze medalist ended South Korea's 20-year stranglehold on the men's middleweight division Saturday as he battled from behind to whip Park Kyeong-Hoon, 4-3, in the 84kg final.

It was Iran's third gold medal in taekwondo since the sport made its debut at the 1986 Asian Games in Seoul.

"I'm very happy that I beat Korea. I wish the referees could score more fairly," said Karami, also the 2003 world champion.

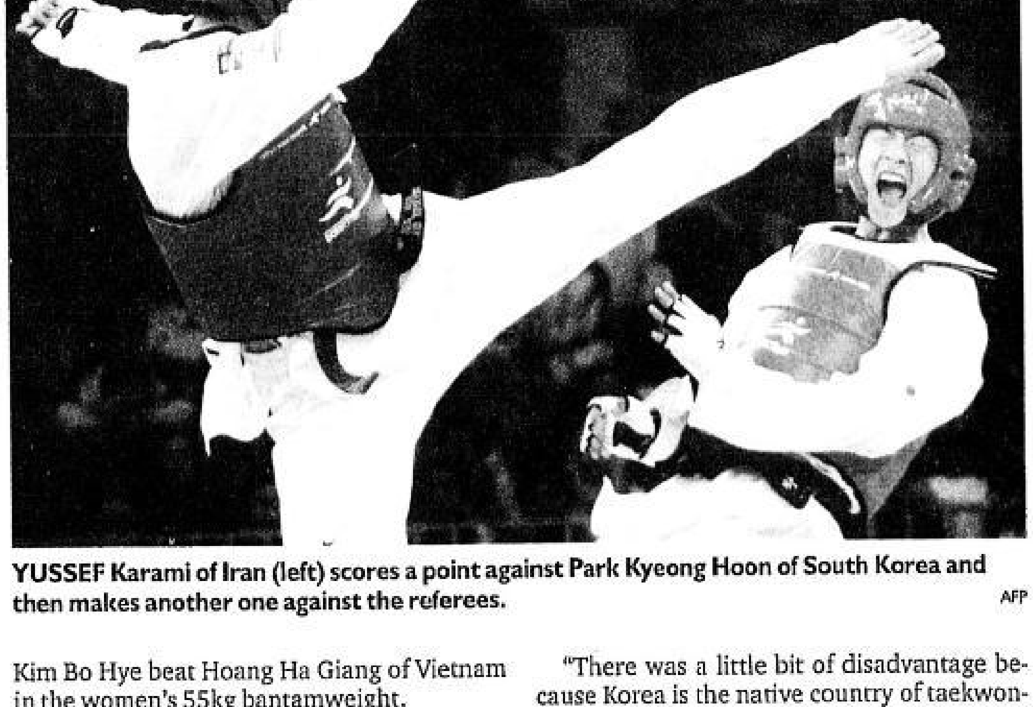
"More preference for Korean players must not be given, just because taekwondo originates from Korea."

Complaints against referees have been commonplace in this 2,000-year-old high-octane sport of kicking, punching and yelling even after it became an Olympic discipline in 2000.

Crowd reactions have often been suspected of influencing split-second decisions by referees on whether or not high-speed kicks and punches hit the marks.

The scoring system has improved and a point is given only when three of the four referees agree on it.

South Korea still won two gold medals on the third of the four-day competition as Kim Ju Young beat Tshomlee Go of the Philippines in the men's 62kg bantamweight final and Kim Bo Hye beat Hoang Ha Giang of Vietnam in the women's 55kg bantamweight.

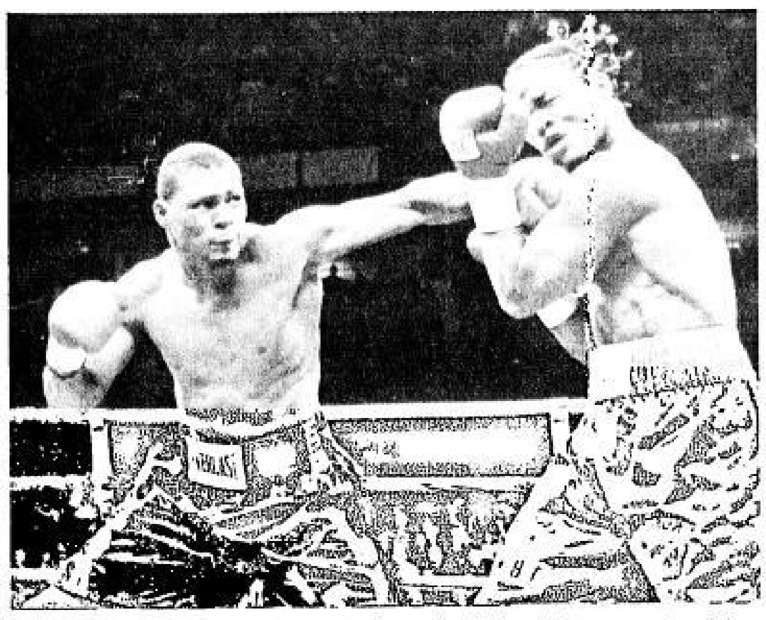


YUSSEF Karami of Iran (left) scores a point against Park Kyeong Hoon of South Korea and then makes another one against the referees. AFP

In the women's 72kg middleweight final, Luo Wei of China beat Alaa Kutkut of Jordan with South Korea's Lee In-Jong and Iranian Mahroz Sae Nonehkohal grabbing bronze medals.

"There was a little bit of disadvantage because Korea is the native country of taekwondo," Lee said. "I had an emotional burden."

South Korea remains on course to strike its target of seven gold medals here. It currently has six. *AFP*



WORLD middleweight champion Jermain Taylor, left, connects with a jab to the head of Kassim Ouma. AP

Taylor triumphs

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS—American Jermain Taylor retained his World Boxing Council middleweight world title here Saturday with a 12-round unanimous decision over Uganda-born southpaw Kassim Ouma.

Fighting in front of a vocal hometown crowd, Taylor remained unbeaten, improving to 26-0 with one drawn and 17 wins inside the distance.

The ringside judges scored it 117-111, 115-113 and 118-110 for Taylor, who is also the World Boxing Association middleweight "super" world champion and holder of the lightly regarded World Boxing Organization belt.

Ouma, a former International Boxing Federation junior middleweight champion, fell to 25-3, with one drawn and 15 knockouts.

The game Ouma did his best to pressure Taylor, but couldn't do any damage to the champion.

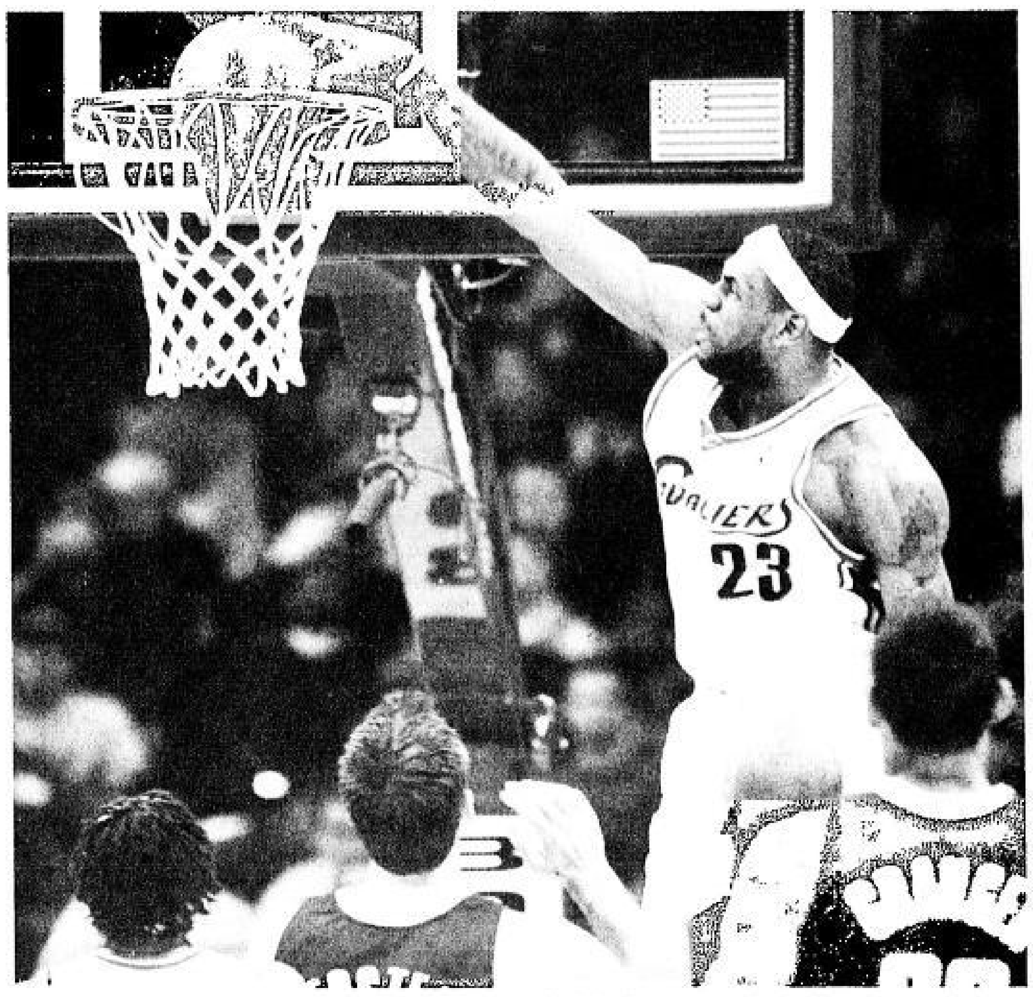
"He came in and he fought. That little guy, he's a tough guy," said Taylor, who enjoyed a significant advantage in height and reach.

Taylor admitted he hurt himself by trying too hard for a knockout, the effort sometimes throwing him off balance.

"I had it in my head all night I wanted to knock him out, and I threw myself out," Taylor said, adding that the effort also left him tired in the closing rounds.

By then, however, it was all but over. Under an experimental scoring system, the judges' scores were announced in the arena after the fourth and eighth rounds. *AFP*

Yao powers Rockets



CLEVELAND Cavaliers superstar LeBron James (23) dunks against the Indians Pacers during the second quarter of their game. AP

WASHINGTON—CHINESE STAR YAO MING scored 38 points, 23 of them in the fourth quarter after Tracy McGrady departed with back spasms, to lead the Houston Rockets past Washington, 114-109, here Saturday.

The 7-foot-6 center took command of the NBA game by scoring Houston's first 12 points of the final period after McGrady, who expects to return Tuesday, was sent to the locker room.

"I had to do more work to put the team in a good position," Yao said.

"Tracy McGrady is the best player on our team. Somebody had to step up."

Yao's season-high point total was only three points off his NBA career high. He scored eight points during a 3:04 stretch of the fourth quarter played in diminished brightness due to a lighting malfunction.

The bulbs began shining but Yao turned the lights out on the Wizards, spoiling a 41-point performance by Gilbert Arenas.

"He obviously delivered," Rockets coach Jeff Van Gundy said of Yao. "He can have bad nights but consistently he is going to score."

Yao also grabbed a game-high 11 rebounds and swatted aside six shots in nearly 40 minutes, sparking another solid performance by the NBA's toughest defensive unit.

"Yao took over in the fourth quarter. That's what the big fellow can do," said McGrady, who did not expect a long-term injury absence.

"I feel pretty good. I'm confident I'll be back on the court Tuesday. I'm not worried about it."

The Rockets won for the eighth time in 10 games and improved to 14-6, their best start since 1996 and trailing only Utah and San Antonio among NBA rivals. The Wizards slid to 9-11.

Paul Pierce's basket at the buzzer helped the Boston Celtics snap a five-game losing streak with a 92-90 win over the New Jersey Nets in the NBA in East Rutherford on Saturday.

The Celtics overcame an early 20-point deficit and despite still being seven games under the .500 mark, moved right into contention for top spot in the woeful Atlantic Division thanks to the victory.

Despite the loss, their third straight, the Nets held on to a share of the lead in the Atlantic with the Toronto Raptors. Both teams are 7-12 but still good enough to lead the weak group, with Boston (6-13) now just one game out of first place. *AFP, Reuters*

COMPLETE NBA RESULTS: Houston 114, Washington 109; Orlando 86, Philadelphia 84; Boston 92, New Jersey 90; NY Knicks 115, Milwaukee 107; Cleveland 107, Indiana 75; LA Clippers 89, Memphis 82; Minnesota 91, Chicago 81; Dallas 105, Denver 90; Golden State 101, NO/Oklahoma City 80

Sweden new World Cup leader by 1

ST. JAMES, BARBADOS—THE UNITED States made seven consecutive birdies to end the front nine, vaulting up the leaderboard. Wales finished its day with five straight, and Scotland strung together four in a row to put itself into contention.

Still, they're all looking up at Sweden and Argentina entering Sunday's final round of the last World Golf Championships event of the year.

Welcome to a suddenly close-knit World Cup, which seemed destined to be an Argentine runaway at one point before the leaderboard turned into one giant cluster at Sandy Lane. Sweden (63) rallied to finish Saturday 16-under par and with a one-shot lead over Argentina (67), with Scotland (65) another shot back.

CABRERA AP

After the Scots, it's a seven-way tie for fourth at 11 under—with Wales (62) and the US (63) making big third-round moves to get into that cluster, along with Italy (64), Mexico (65), Spain (67), South Africa (67) and Germany (68).

"I think it might be a dogfight tomorrow," Stewart Cink of the US said.

If not for Cink, the US—seeking its first World Cup since 2000—probably wouldn't be included.

Cink had five of the seven birdies during the Americans' big run to end the front side, a burst that started when JJ Henry drove the green at the downwind third hole, two-putting from about 22 meters (23 yards).

The US team struggled to a 2-over 73 in Friday's alternate-shot round, putting itself in an eight-shot hole entering Saturday.

"Before we even started this morning, I told JJ it felt like a day where we should just aim at every flag," Cink said. "And why not? I don't know really why that was, but we didn't have a lot to lose."

Now, they have a lot to chase—the winning team after Sunday's foursomes round splits $1.4 million.

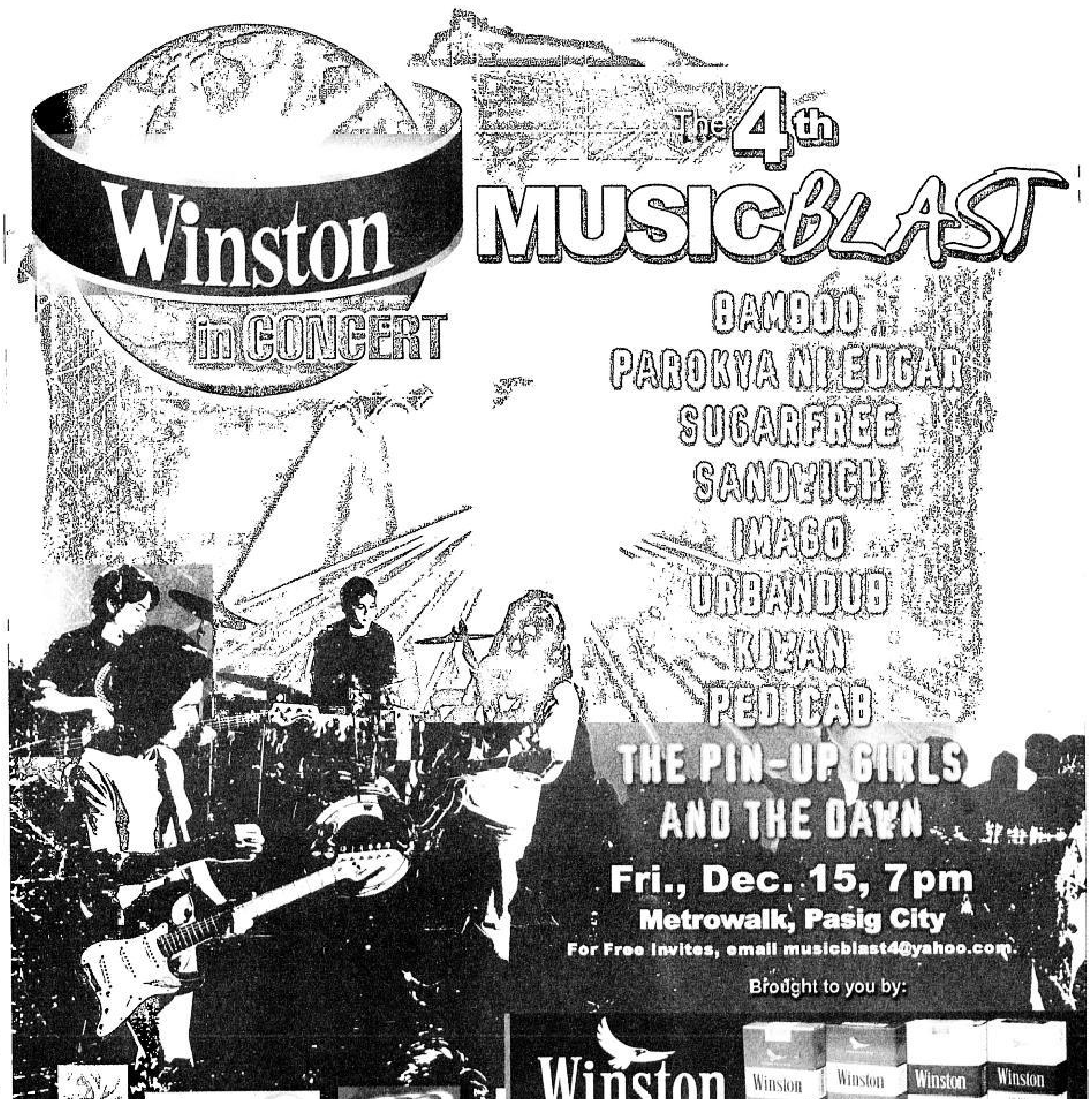
Sweden's Carl Petterson had five birdies, four of them on the back side, to help his team into the lead. He and Henrik Stenson have Sweden poised to win its first World Cup title since 1991, nine years before the event was added to the World Golf Championships schedule.

"We were trying to grind," Petterson said. "We knew we had to shoot low, and on the back nine we really got it going."

Argentina's Andres Romero and Angel Cabrera saw their run of 42 straight holes without a bogey end at Saturday's eighth hole and stalled somewhat from there.

Argentina entered the day three shots ahead of the field and was five shots ahead after four birdies in Saturday's first seven holes. But after the bogey on the par-3 eighth, Romero and Cabrera had only one more birdie the rest of the way and Sweden took advantage.

"We are close," Romero said. "One stroke. It's not very much. We are sure of that." *AP*



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SERMONA (left) exults after winning the men's 42K, while Banayag (inset) rules the women's race in record-breaking fashion. ERIK ARAZAS

Training buddies Milo race champs

By Jasmine W. Payo

TWO TRAINING COMPANIONS came—and accomplished—one purpose.

Julius Sermona and Jho-an Banayag, buddies who work together in the national pool, ruled the 42K event of the 30th National Milo Marathon's grand finale in contrasting fashions yesterday morning.

The 28-year-old Sermona completed only the second marathon of his career, putting the finishing touches to a mammoth upset by clocking two hours, 21 minutes and 52 seconds for the men's crown and the P75,000 that goes with it.

Sermona pulled away in the final three kilometers to finish nearly a minute ahead of veteran Bernardo Desamito, who clocked 2:22:44, before Allan Ballester checked in third with a time of 2:23:13.

Just a shade above five feet and weighing only 43 kilograms, Banayag, meanwhile, ran unopposed under intermittent rains in the final 17 km for a successful women's title defense, setting a record time of 2:48:16 for the race that started and ended at the Quirino Grandstand inside Rizal Park.

Flordeliza Carreon was second, nearly four minutes behind, in 2:52:04, with Estela Mamac-Diaz bagging third place in 2:56:15.

Banayag also won P75,000 and got an additional P10,000 for obliterating the old record.

"It's just hard work, we've been training together for six months in Baguio City," Banayag said in Filipino after impressively breaking the women's race record of 2:53:58 by Cristabel Martes in 2004 by more than five minutes.

While Banayag conquered the field with such ease, Sermona, a natural middle distance runner, finished just 19 seconds shy of the men's standard of 2:21:33 owned by Cresenciano Sabal, the hot favorite and defending champion who checked in a badly beaten seventh.

"Everyone was expecting Sabal to win," Sermona said in Filipino. "I was surprised. I never expected that I could win."

High altitude training

Despite his brilliance in middle-distance races, Sermona had often dropped out in full marathons. The Negros Occidental native has finished a full marathon once—a seventh place finish in the 2001 edition.

"I think my high-altitude training helped," said Sermona, a silver medalist in the 5,000-meter and a bronze winner in the 10,000-meter events of the 2005 Southeast Asian Games.

Sabal had talked about breaking his old record this year, leading the huge field for most of the race before his legs abandoned him in the final 10 km. His time of 2:29:50 was more than eight minutes off his personal best.

"I think he got burned out," observed Sermona. "He had been racing almost weekly, he pushed himself too hard."

But perhaps, training with a champion runner simply paid off for Sermona. And for Banayag, running alongside a faster male racer likely tested her limits.

12,000 runners

A total of 12,910 runners participated in various divisions of the finale that held 29 elimination runs for the past months in 29 cities all over the country.

A P50,000 purse was awarded each to runners-up Desamito and Carreon, who also posted better clocking than the women's old mark.

Third placers Ballester and Mamac-Diaz settled for P30,000 each.

In the 10K side event, Jerry Lindawan (32:51), Ramon Salbino (33:35) and Jordan Oberes (33:53) paced the men's division. Cinderella Agana (42:28), Beryl Bacolcol (45:36) and Rea Pica (45:41) topped the distaff side.

The 5K winners included Roosebelt Lobo (15:43), Ranel Kudera (16:00) and Bernardo Adano (16:03) in the men's race, while Nhea Barcena (22:16), Jonalyn Playa (24:06) and Ma. Jennyfer Capuli (24:33) bested the women's division.

Louvert Garcia and Malca Mae Tacsiat led the 6-9 category, while Miguel Gonzales and Julifer Larioza paced the 10-12 category of the Kiddies 3K age-group.

Qatar 'import' tops Asiad marathon

DOHA, QATAR—KENYAN-BORN Mubarak Hassan Shami won the Asian Games marathon for host Qatar on Sunday, finishing almost three minutes ahead of his nearest rival.

Shami, who was formerly known as Richard Yatich before taking Qatari citizenship in 2005, finished the 42.2-kilometer seaside Corniche street circuit in 2 hours, 12 minutes and 44 seconds.

Bahrain's Khalid Kamal Yaseen, also born in Kenya, narrowly beat Satoshi Osako of Japan in a photo finish after both had 2:15:36.

Shami pulled away from the pack at the 25-kilometer mark and continued to extend his lead in the final stretch under sunny skies in humid 23 Celsius (73 Fahrenheit) conditions.

"I broke away because everybody else in the race was running very slow," Shami said. "The chase pack today was much too slow. That makes my gold medal much easier to get."

Shami and Yaseen, formerly known as Peter Ndegwa, are among several Kenyans who have switched nationality to one of the Persian Gulf states in return for better funding and opportunities to compete.

"Everybody in Kenya is running, is running faster, everyone wants gold," said Shami. "If I was in Kenya, maybe I would not be able to run for the country."

In other athletic events, Guzel Khubbieva of Kazakhstan easily qualified for the 200 meters. AP

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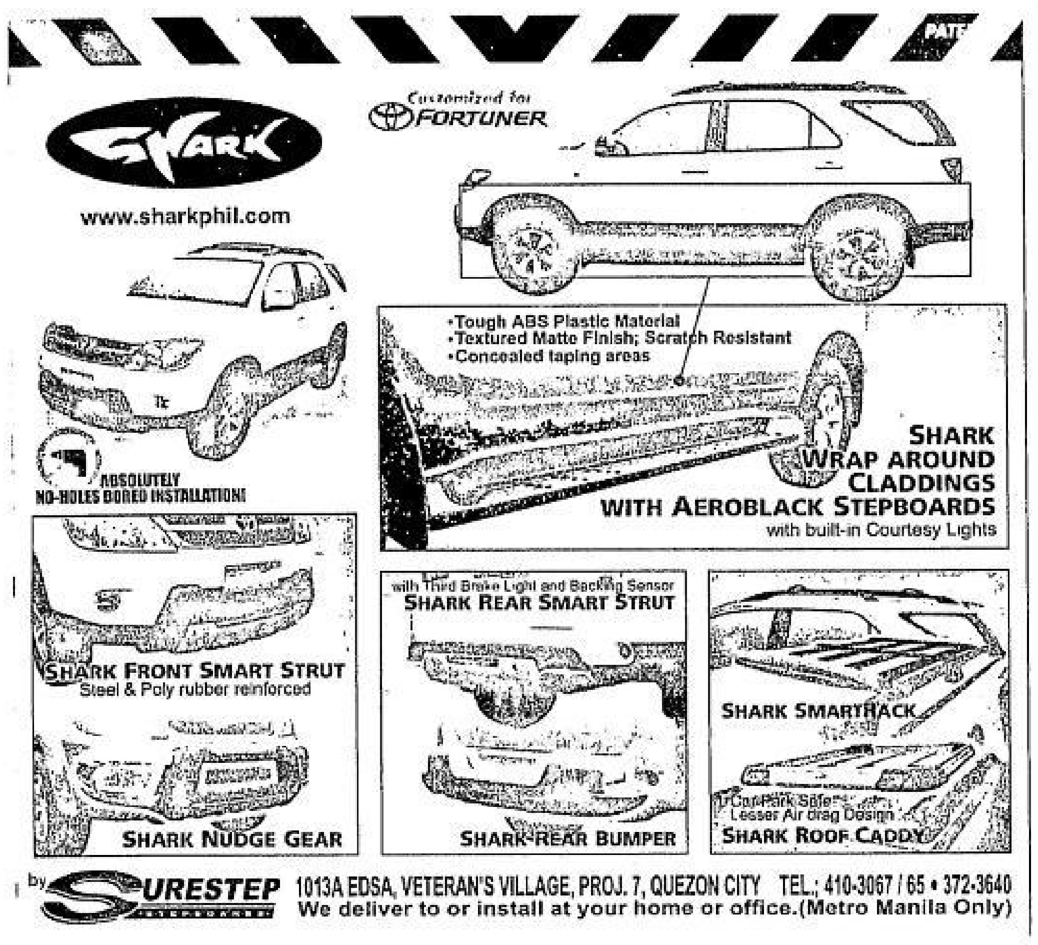

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Quiñahan PBL's brightest

By Jasmine W. Payo

HIS INITIAL OUTINGS WITH MAIL AND More proved to be quite a disappointment.

It turned out to be just JR Quiñahan's way of finding his comfort zone with his new team in the PBL Silver Cup.

Quiñahan, a recruit from the disbanded Granny Goose, has so far proven to be key to the Comets' surprising rise to second spot.

"He's new, he just needed to jell with the team," said Comets coach Lawrence Chongson.

As the Cebuano standout rediscovered his explosive form, Mail and More's game started to pick up as well.

The Comets charged with a three-game winning run capped by a come-from-behind upset victory over the league-leading Hapee-PCU, where Quiñahan logged in 13 points, 16 rebounds, five blocks and four assists in a 66-63 victory Saturday.

With the victory, the Comets joined Henkel Sista in second spot at 4-2, just a game behind Hapee-PCU's 5-1 slate and Quinahan's consolation was that the covering media named him as their Player of the Week.

The wide-bodied center also showed brilliance by holding his own against 6-foot-8 Nigerian Sam Ekwe, the NCAA Rookie-MVP. In leading the Comets past Magnolia and Ekwe, Quiñahan finished just a rebound-shy of a double-double after scattering 21 points. He also had four blocks and two assists in a 67-58 triumph.

QUIÑAHAN

"I just want to help the team in whatever way I can," said Quiñahan.

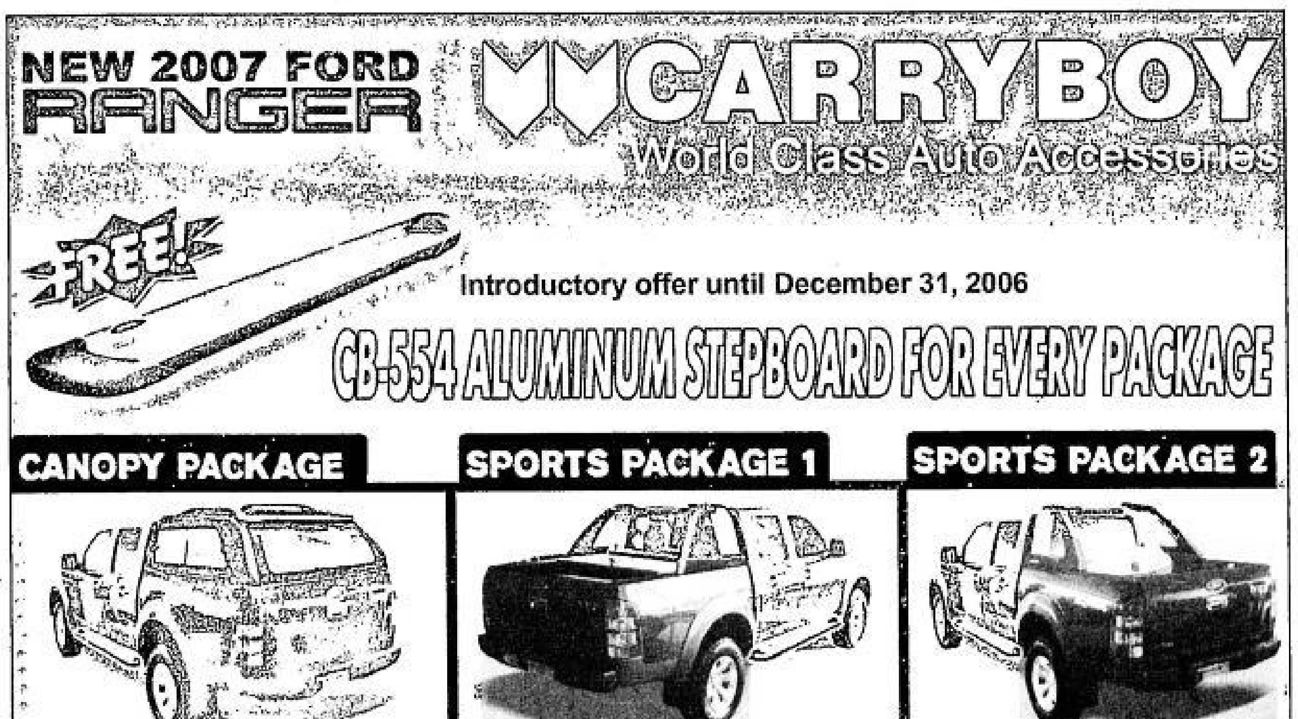
Playing a sparkplug's role isn't new for Quiñahan.

As a league rookie, Quiñahan powered Granny Goose to the semifinals in its maiden stint in 2004.

"He's starting to show his experience," said Chongson. "He's proving to be the vital cog of this team."

Quiñahan normed 16.6 points, 10.1 rebounds and 3.6 blocks in Mail and More's last three wins to edge Henkel Sista's Marcy Arellano and Toyota Otis' Marvin Cruz for the weekly honors.

Recent winners of the citation included Hapee-PCU's Mark Borboran and Jason Castro and Henkel Sista's Kelvin Gregorio.



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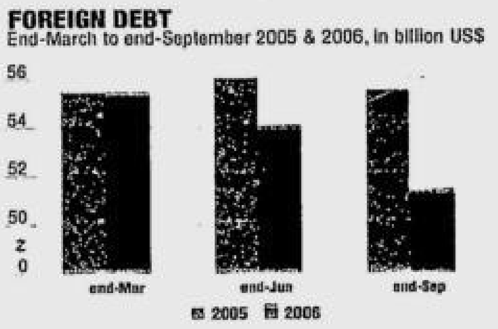
RP foreign debt burden down by $2.7B


FOREIGN DEBT
End-March to end-September 2005 & 2006, in billion US$

Strong peso prompts borrowers to prepay loans

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES HAS TRIMMED ITS FOREIGN DEBT stock by about $2.7 billion as of end-September as local borrowers took advantage of strong foreign exchange inflows and the strengthening peso to pare their external obligations down.

Documents from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed that in the first nine months of the year, public and private sector borrowers contracted new foreign debts worth $15.39 billion.

These included proceeds from the national government's latest global bond offerings—$764 million in global bonds maturing in 2024 and another $435 million falling due 2031.

But the Philippines has ceased to be a net borrower. Both public and private sector borrowers made principal payments of $15.17 billion and interest of $2.9 billion, or a net outflow of $2.7 billion as of end-September.

This net outflow was bigger than the

RP FOREIGN/ B2

BPI gets BSP nod to open London branch

THE AYALAS' BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISlands is set to venture into the European market to get a bigger share of the lucrative overseas Filipino workers' (OFW) remittance business.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla Jr. told reporters Friday that the BSP's policy-making Monetary Board has approved BPI's request for authority to establish a wholly owned banking subsidiary in London.

"It will be called BPI Europe. It will support their growing banking business in Europe," Espenilla said.

The proposed branch in London will be BPI's first foray in Europe throughout its 155-year history, making it the third bank to break into this market after Allied Bank and Philippine National Bank, both controlled by taipan Lucio Tan.

"They are competing with PNB in remittances. BPI wants to tap more of the OFW market," Espenilla said.

In a separate interview, BPI president Aurelio Montinola III said the bank was still awaiting approval from British regulator Financial Services Authority to operate a full branch.

"In general, we go where our customers are. Since there are a lot of OFWs in Europe, we thought we would be able to open a service there so that we can cater to their banking needs," Montinola said.

He noted that BPI earlier launched BPI Direct Savings Bank, a new Web-based banking subsidiary that seeks to carve a niche in the OFW market.

"This is the second leg. BPI Europe will take care of their banking needs," Montinola said.

He said the proposed London branch would

BOI/ B8

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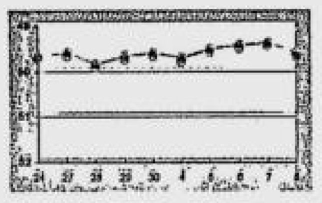

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STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

(See stock market report on Page B8-B9)

Stocks seen to rise

FUND MANAGERS AND ANALYSTS EXPECT an interesting week ahead for local stocks.

They said political jitters from planned protest actions against the House of Representatives' convening itself into a constituent assembly (Con-ass) to amend the 1987 Constitution were not likely to rattle market players.

"Stock investors are risk takers. There's some fatigue (from stock investors) in political hullabaloos," said a fund manager at a large brokerage house.

He said investors were likely to watch out for possible boosts in Lopez-owned stocks after the Supreme Court reversed an appellate court ruling declaring as illegal

He said investors were likely to watch out for possible boosts to Lopez-owned stocks after family-led utility firm Manila Electric Co. won its petition at the Supreme Court against a Court of Appeals' ruling that tagged as illegal in July 2004 a 17-centavo per kilowatt-hour tariff increase.

"Meralco is expected to benefit immensely from this ruling after it provisioned more than P21 billion in contingencies (P5.9 billion in 2005 and P4.6 billion in nine months 2006), pending the decision on the case," AB Capital Securities said in a weekly note.

STOCKS/ B7

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3 YEAR WARRANTY

Third-quarter slowdown, again

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

NEWS ON THE THIRD-QUARTER (Q3) performance of the Philippine economy recently came and went without the usual fanfare, for understandable reason: The news wasn't particularly good. Almost a year ago today, I had the same title (without the "again") for my article in this column. After posting a 5.4-percent annual GDP growth in the second quarter (Q2) of 2005, our economy grew 4.8 percent in the succeeding quarter. It picked up again somewhat in Q4 with a 5.3-percent growth, and 2005 ended with a full-year average growth of 4.9 percent. (This, by the way, is the final adjusted figure. Few will probably remember that the full-year figure first announced early last year was 5.1 percent. That was quietly lowered to 4.9 percent as more complete data subsequently came in.)

Deja vu

We now have a case of déjà vu, with the economy again managing only a 4.8-percent growth in domestic output, after doing 5.8 percent in Q2. Is this a predictable seasonal phenomenon, then? Not quite. Note that these figures give year-on-year growth, meaning, it measures how much the economy grew over the same quarter one year ago. Thus, any recurrent peculiarities about the third quarter relative to the other quarters are already netted out of the measured growth rate. What this means, then, is that one has to look beyond seasonal factors to explain why the economy didn't do quite as well as it did in the preceding periods. In other words, something is wrong that may need fixing.

To understand what might be going wrong, we have to look more closely at the Q3 data and find out where the slowdown is coming from.

Good news, bad news

As always, the third-quarter economic performance had a mix of good and bad news. The good news is coming largely from the services sector, which accounts for about half of our total output (and therefore incomes as well). Specific sub-sectors that have grown faster than in previous quarters, and in comparison to a year ago, are transport, communication and storage; wholesale and retail trade; and real estate. Communication, dominated by telecommunication services, is still doing worse than a year ago, but at least improved on its Q2 growth of 8.4 percent to post 9 percent in the most recent assessment.

But the good news ends there. The rest of the services sub-sectors—namely finance, personal services and government services—either hadn't improved, or had slower growth. And the other economic sectors (agriculture and industry) and the sub-sectors therein exhibited worse performance in the latest quarterly assessment. The impressive 7-percent Q2 growth in agriculture could not be sustained, and slowed down to 4.1 percent, driven primarily by double-digit growth in sugarcane and palay production. Industry moderated to 4 percent (from last quarter's 5.6 percent), with mining output actually falling, while manufacturing, construction and utilities all grew more slowly.

Who are buying?

So why are most of the sectors and specific industries not faring as well as before? We need to look at the side of the buyers, as it is ultimately demand that producers respond to. Household purchases (personal consumption) slowed somewhat to 5.3 percent in Q3, from 5.5 percent in the first half. But more telling is the way purchases coming from the government, foreigners (via our exports) and other firms (via investment expenditures), all significantly slowed down, or in the case of investment, actually fell.

Government efforts to trim the budget deficit clearly showed in the way government consumption virtually stood still (0.4 percent), whereas it had averaged a 5.2-percent growth in the first half of the year. Exports, after posting a double-digit growth of 20.4 percent in Q2, have moderated to a 9.1-percent growth in Q3, with a particularly severe slowdown in services exports. This should come as no surprise to anyone, given how the peso has strengthened over the past year. This either made our exports less desirable (i.e. more expensive) to our foreign buyers, or our exporters have found it less desirable to sell as much as before because they get less pesos for the same foreign-currency prices they may have been forced to maintain to stay competitive. Either way, exports tend to slow down with a stronger currency.

Falling investment

We have been noting with alarm in this column how investment has been falling continuously since the start of 2005. The drop in fixed capital formation—particularly via construction and purchases of durable equipment—has continued into Q3. While overall investment appears to have grown positively (4.4 percent), the only reason for this is that inventories piled up, and when they do, it is accounted for as an investment as well. But we all know this is probably bad news rather than good, because piling inventories means producers have not been able to sell an increasing portion of what they produced.

And this, as I have been arguing lately, is the crux of our economy's challenge. Domestic investors appear not to have enough confidence in our future at this time to put in place greater productive capacity. Perhaps this would not be so if only our majority "lawmakers" would do their jobs and stick to policymaking, rather than preoccupy themselves with perpetuating their power—even if they have to be so brazen about it. The sad part of it all is that these lawbreakers in Congress have the temerity (or maybe in some cases the naiveté) to claim that they are doing the country a big favor.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

BOI eyes tax perks for 'centers of excellence'

By Abigail L. Ho

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENTS is mulling the inclusion of centers of excellence—institutions that will help equip Filipinos with the right skills for various service-oriented industries—in the 2007 Investment Priorities Plan.

BOI governor Francis Ferrer said that as the country continued to export people, institutions that would help enhance their skills had to be established.

"We're providing people abroad, so we need (entities that will provide) specialized training to Filipino workers. Anybody who can improve the salability of Filipino workers can be included," he told reporters.

Right now, he said there were still no concrete plans on how the BOI would determine which entities would qualify as centers of excellence.

Another detail that the BOI would have to work out, he said, was how these centers of excellence could be differentiated from educational institutions.

Institutions offering nothing but specific trainings related to various service-oriented industries could readily be classified as centers of excellence, he said.

Those that offer specialized courses in addition to regular college degrees, however, could not be included under the centers of excellence umbrella just like that, he said.

He noted that some educational institutions already offer specialized courses on call centers and other business process outsourcing-related skills.

"That's one detail we have to work out. Educational institutions don't qualify. But those that also offer skills training, we may have to consider for inclusion, but maybe not entirely," he explained.

The BOI, he said, was still discussing the framework of the 2007 IPP, so no concrete plans have yet been made, except that there were plans to highlight some industries and scrap others.

One industry to be highlighted, he said, was the healthcare and wellness sector, which was already a part of the 2006 IPP.

"We're discussing what procedures to use in giving incentives to entities engaged in wellness and retirement. We'll be formulating incentives for that, including the usual tax holiday and duty-free importation of equipment. But these incentives will be tailor-fit for the retirement and wellness tourism industries," he said.

RP foreign debt . . .

From page B1

comparable period last year when $1.24 billion in net outflow was registered.

"These transactions reflect the decisions of both public and private sectors, both awash with external liquidity, to pay down their external debt obligations," a BSP report said.

The BSP, the cash-strapped National Power Corp. and state-owned lender Development Bank of the Philippines led the list of institutions that made huge payments in the first nine months.

Excluding revaluations, these transactions could ease the country's external debt stock to $51.2 billion from the latest report of $53.9 billion at end-June.

Official creditors—consisting of multilateral institutions, such as the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, and bilateral creditors like the Japan Bank for International Cooperation—account for about 40 percent of the country's total debt.

Foreign holders of bonds and notes account for 34 percent, and foreign banks and other financial institutions, 22 percent. The rest of the creditors are mostly foreign suppliers.

Despite the net outflows from debt servicing during the nine-month period, the Philippines posted a balance-of-payments surplus of $2.62 billion following double-digit growth in overseas Filipino workers' remittances, a narrowing trade deficit due to strong merchandise exports, sustained foreign direct investment inflows and higher investment income of the BSP.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between the domestic economy and the rest of the world.

Any transaction which gives rise to a payment by a Philippine resident like importation or debt servicing is a deficit item in the BOP while a transaction that gives rise to a receipt like borrowing, exporting or inward remittance is a surplus item.

The strengthening of the peso against the US dollar in the last few months alongside the bullish regional currency market has given the BSP the opportunity to further build up its reserves while smoothening excess market volatility.

The peso, which was now trading at the 49 level for the first time in four-and-a-half years, has risen by about 6.7 percent since the start of the year.

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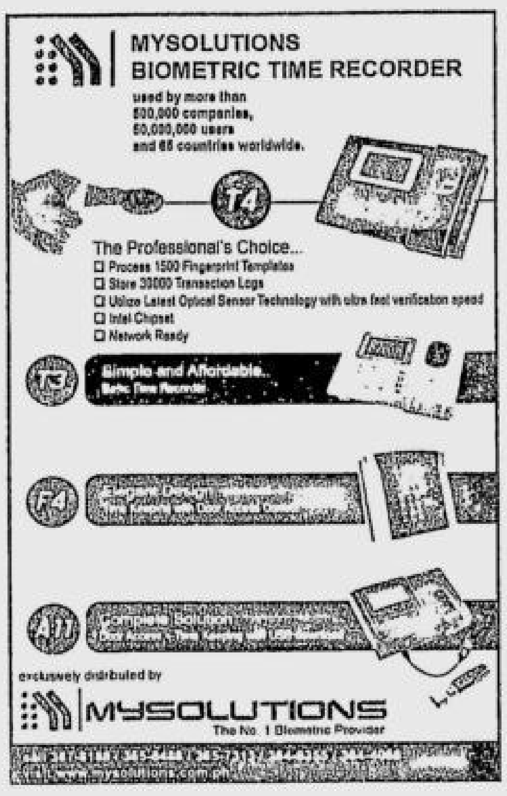

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Canada to help SMEs in ARMM

DAVAO CITY—CANADA WANTS TO HELP strengthen small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) as a way of supporting the peace process between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Peter Sutherland, Canadian ambassador to the Philippines, said.

Canada has set aside a portion of the P45-million Philippine fund under the Canadian International Development Agency (Cida) for the development of SMEs in conflict-torn areas in the region, Sutherland said.

He said Canada believed that economic development would come when business enterprises were more competitive, as this would mean more jobs and better living conditions of the people in the region.

The National Statistics Office (NSO) said the per capita income in the ARMM was only about P15,000 in 2000, which is the lowest among the country's 16 regions.

Per capita income is defined as the total personal income of a certain area in a year, divided by the total population.

"There seems to be a link between economic prosperity and peace and security problem," Sutherland said during a recent visit here. "Areas where there is high economic activity are usually peaceful."

"When we start getting jobs for people, we begin to have vested interest in peace, a kind of a virtuous cycle, so, we're trying to create an environment where businesses come in,

CANADA/ B4

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Seaoil solidifies plans to put up ethanol plant

By Abigail L. Ho

Oil firm says Biofuels Law good incentive

FOLLOWING THE PASSAGE OF the Biofuels Bill at both houses of Congress, independent oil firm Seaoil Petroleum Corp. has concretized plans to put up an ethanol plant.

In an interview, Seaoil president Glenn Yu said the passage of the bill was the only thing that the oil firm was waiting for before drafting a more concrete plan to put up its own refining plant that can produce 100,000 liters a day of ethanol.

The ethanol produced from either sugarcane or cassava is blended with gasoline to produce cleaner fuel.

Earlier in the year, Yu said Seaoil's plan to establish its own ethanol production facility was contingent on the passage of the Biofuels Bill into a law, as this would create a market for ethanol-blended gasoline.

Under the Biofuels Act of 2006, all gasoline products should have an ethanol content of at least 5 percent within two years of the effectivity of the law.

All diesel-fed vehicles, on the other hand, should use a minimum 1-percent biodiesel blend within three months of the law's effectivity.

The mandated blend will rise to 2 percent for biodiesel after two years, and to at least 10 percent for bioethanol after four years.

Apart from the ready market for biofuels that the law creates, the Biofuels Act of 2006 also provides incentives for the production, distribution and use of locally produced biofuels.

These include exemptions from the specific and value-added taxes, as well as financial assistance from government financial institutions.

Even without a law on biofuels in place, Seaoil in August last year became the first oil firm in the country to sell gasoline pre-blended with ethanol directly from its pumps.

Because it had no local ethanol facility in place, Seaoil sourced its requirements from Brazil, the world's most cost-efficient ethanol producer.

British firm Bronzeoak Ltd., through local arm Bronzeoak Philippines Ltd., has tied up with National Development Corp. to establish the San Carlos Bio-Energy Inc. plant, an integrated facility that will produce some 100,000 liters of bio-ethanol a day.

It will also have a cane milling plant with a throughput capacity of 1,500 metric tons of cane daily, as well as a co-generation power plant that will produce around 9 megawatts (MW) of power, of which 4 MW will be sold to the grid.

It should start commercial operations by next year or early 2008.

According to the Philippines Fuel Ethanol Alliance, the passage of the Biofuels Bill will generate a guaranteed annual demand of between 200 million and 400 million liters of ethanol.

To meet this expected ethanol demand, the group said at least 14 ethanol production facilities with capacities of at least 100,000 liters a day had to be established.

Transco asks local gov'ts to guard lines

NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORP. HAS asked local government and barangay officials to help guard fallen transmission line cables and tower parts in Bicol against looters.

Transco president Arthur Aguilar said one of the state firm's biggest problems was pilferage, as this not only slowed the power restoration process in provinces affected by typhoons, but also made existing steel towers more prone to being toppled or damaged by strong winds.

"To hasten power restoration, we have reinforced our transmission line teams in south Luzon with those from north Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. But we hope that our cables, tower parts, insulators, especially those now lying on the ground, will not be stolen so that power restoration will not suffer undue delays," he said in a statement.

Host communities as well as law enforcement agencies could do their part in the repair by helping protect Transco's facilities from looters.

Aguilar said there were about 2,500 towers between Metro Manila and Bicol, making it difficult for Transco to guard them all. *Abigail L. Ho.*

Canada to help . . .

From page B3

jobs are created, the economy improves and the lifestyle of the people gets better," Sutherland said.

Ed Sutherland, project director of the Cida-funded Private Enterprise Accelerated Resource Linkages (Pearl 2) project, said they would be meeting with representatives of the ARMM Business Council (ABC) to discuss ways of working together and where Canadian assistance can come in.

Pearl 2, which would start early next year, is considered Cida's flagship project for private sector development in the country.

Sutherland said the first phase of the project had already helped more than a million people in the country, including 400 SMEs in Luzon and the Visayas.

But this would be the first time for Cida to help SMEs in the ARMM, he said.

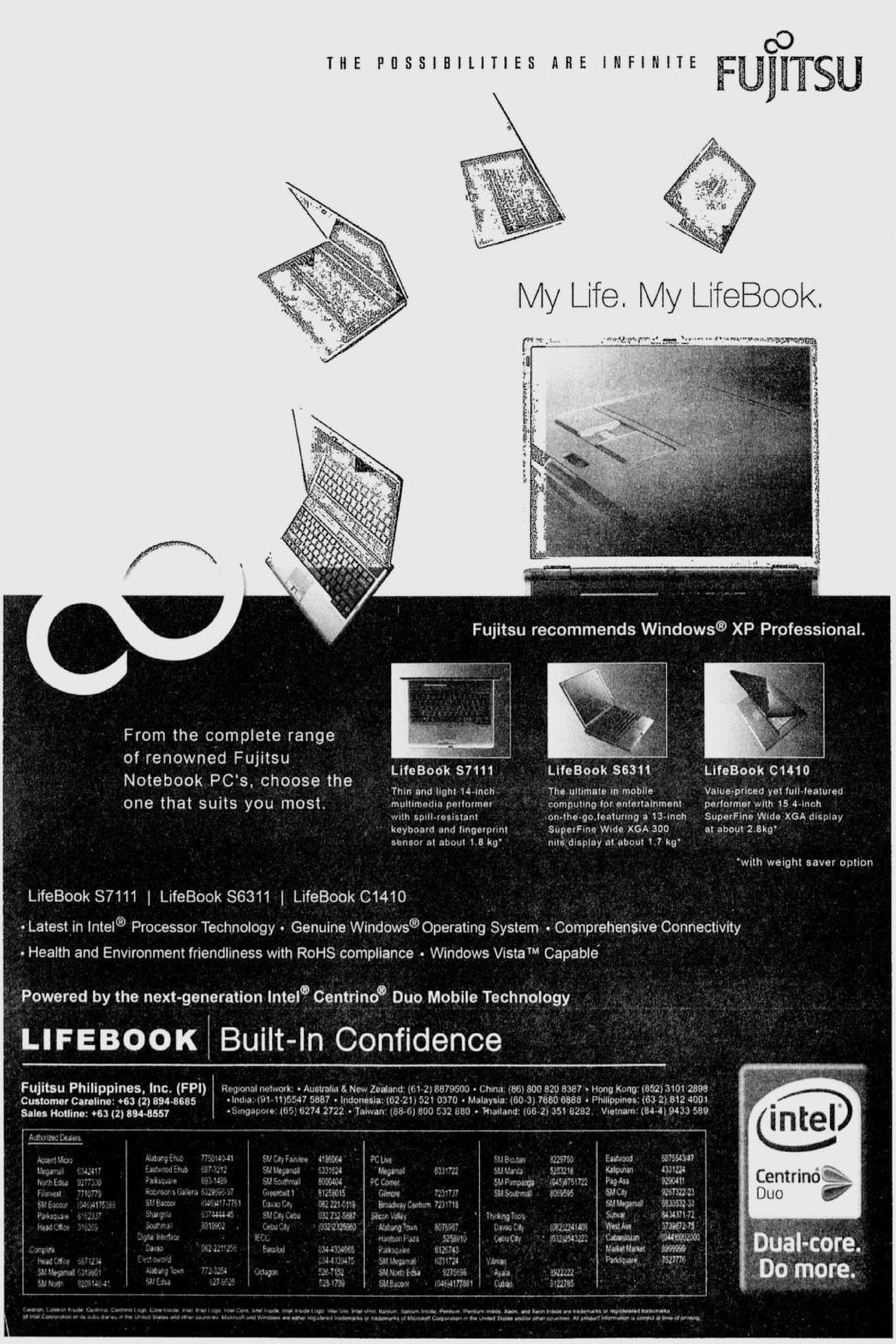
"It's more of a coincidence than a design. Six months ago, we got a proposal from the ARMM Business Council but then, we thought that the [first phase of the] project was about to end. Once we learned of the extension, we thought there would be more time, we immediately thought of the ARMM," Sutherland said.

He said under the Pearl 2 assistance, the focus would be more on labor intensive sectors of furniture and home furnishings, gifts, toys and housewares, food and food processing, fashion accessories, and organic and natural projects.

"Among other things, we want them to improve export sales. If the market in the United States is down, we encourage them to develop their capabilities to find other markets, like Eastern Europe, for instance, because as we found out in the state of the sector report, there is a direct link between increased export sale and increased employment," Sutherland said.

He said when businesses grow, "they hire more people."

"When more people get hired, there's more money in the economy, and ultimately, it improves the economy. So, another million dollars coming into the Philippines will benefit a lot more people," he said. *Germelina Lacorte, Inquirer Mindanao*



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Gatchalian to revive airline business

Air traffic boom enough incentive

By Abigail L. Ho

CITING GOOD PASSENGER LOAD FACTORS in recent months, 'plastics king' William Gatchalian is considering reentering the airline business by reviving Philippine International Airways Inc. (PhilAir) by 2008.

In an interview, Gatchalian said the airline industry was currently doing well and the timing should be just about right for him to reenter a sector that he had almost given up in 1999 when he ceded control of Air Philippines Corp., a company that he founded, to tycoon Lucio Tan.

Air Philippines is now 70 percent owned by Tan, with the remaining 30 percent belonging to Gatchalian and his Wellex Industries.

"Traffic is good. Even Asian Spirit is making money. It's tempting to go back to the (airline) business," he told reporters.

But due to the capital-intensive nature of airline operations, he said there were no concrete plans yet on when exactly PhilAir would make a comeback or what its market positioning would be.

"It's just in the plans. There's no timeframe yet. But hopefully we can do that by 2008," he said.

He said PhilAir would have to reapply for some licenses with the Civil Aeronautics Board, documents that it failed to secure when the airline opened in the late 90s.

PhilAir folded up in early 2000, leaving 12 aircraft unused.

Two of these planes, Gatchalian said, were in Subic, Zambales, while 10 were in the United States.

He expressed optimism that he could break into the local airline business again and take advantage of the air traffic boom that the country had been experiencing in recent months.

"We just need to get the necessary permits from the CAB," he said.

The Tan-owned Philippine Airlines, the country's flag carrier, is currently upgrading its wide-bodied aircraft fleet, proof that the airline industry is currently treading a growth path.

PAL has signed a purchase agreement with aircraft manufacturer Boeing for the acquisition of six Boeing 777-300s over the next six years.

The agreement covers a firm order for two planes, plus purchase rights for two more units.

The De Venecia code

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

SPEAKER DE VENECIA JUST cannot wait to be the first prime minister of a unicameral parliament. In street lingo: *gigil na gigil.*

Having been routed by Joseph Estrada in 1998, JDV knows he will never be president under our present system. He knows the Filipino people do not vote for a loser.

So, in his egomania, JDV wants to turn the country inside out, over and under. Last Nov. 30, the "other" newspaper headlined JDV as saying: "We will have a Charter that shifts the nation to the parliamentary system and replace Congress with a unicameral parliament by Dec. 15." That's four days from today.

I know all JDV's reasons for the shift. First, a parliament will develop effective and responsible parties. But Singapore is a one-party parliament. The puny opposition holds two lonely, and constantly harassed, seats out of 84 seats. Thailand's parties are so weak, turncoatism is rampant. A law had to be passed that if a member votes against his party on an important issue, the member is not only out of his party, but also out of the parliament straightaway. The same law exists in India. In Malaysia, the ruling party is so dominant that political fireworks are confined in the party itself. Bangladesh is no economic power.

JDV says the parliamentary system will solve the gridlock on lawmaking. But the gridlock results from the penchant of congressmen to file as many bills as possible to rename schools, streets, and *esteros*.

JDV says the parliamentary system is the best way to fight poverty. He points to the rich nations in Europe and Asia, all ruled under the parliamentary system. But the poorest nations around the world, especially in Africa, where people die of hunger every day, are all ruled under the parliamentary system.

He says the confidence vote makes it easier to get rid of a bad prime minister. If so, then it is just as easy to get rid of a good prime minister. In any case, the confidence, as a means of toppling a parliament, has become less effective. Last year, the Canadian parliament lost in a confidence vote, the first time in 14 years. France has not had a confidence vote in 40 years. This is because many parliaments have become more presidential in character.

When a smart politico like JDV says things that are clearly mis-

QUESTIONS/ B6

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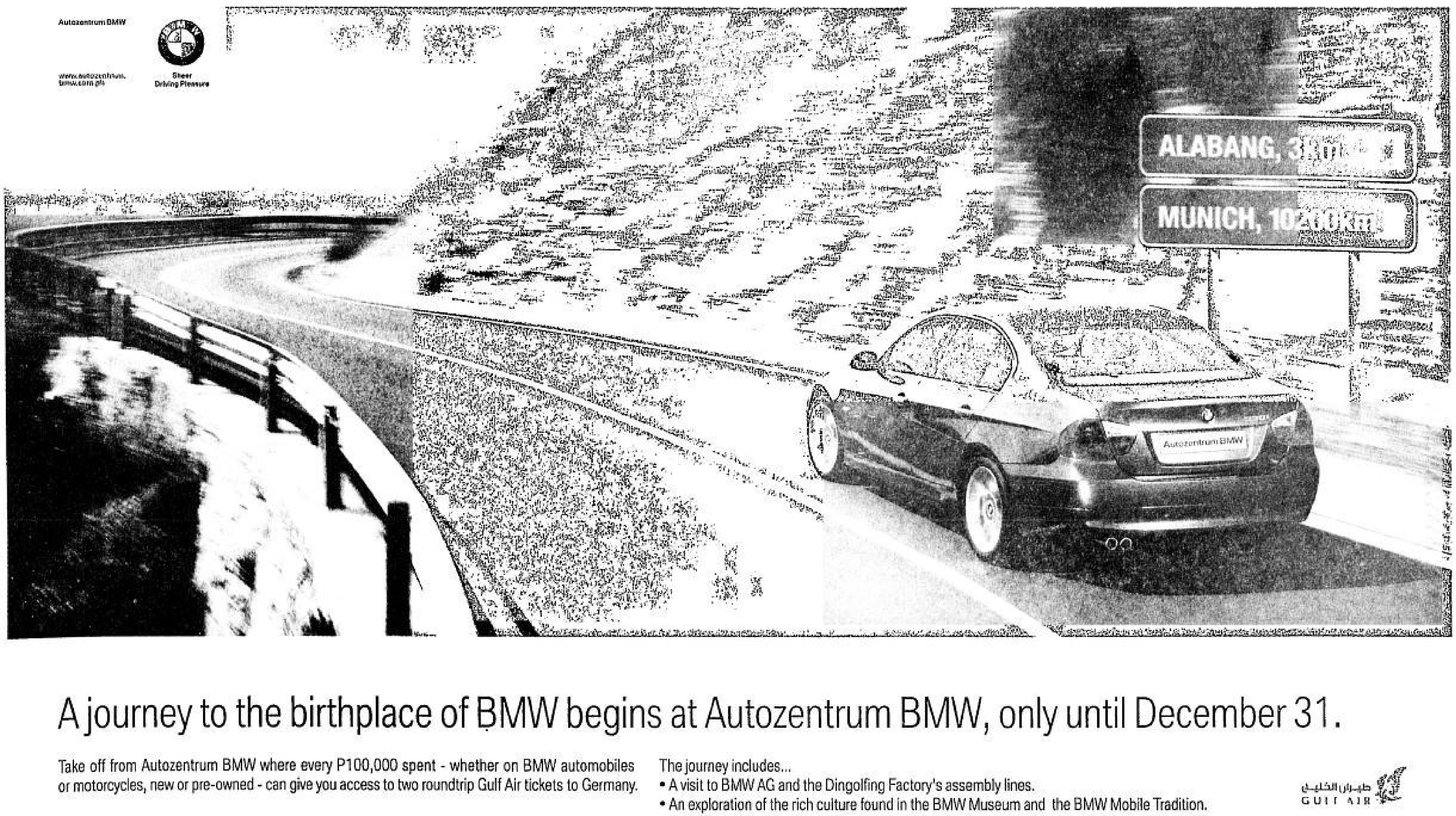

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To boost trade, RP urged to ease customs barriers

At current level, almost all goods are subject to inspection

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT is being urged to raise its cut-off value for customs inspections on international trade which, at present, is criticized for hindering intra-Asean trade.

According to DHL Express Asia-Pacific CEO Scott Price, the country should raise its *de minimis* level to be at par with those of other countries in the region.

De minimis refers to the minimum value below which goods in shipment are exempted from cumbersome scrutiny and documentation procedures of the Bureau of Customs. A higher cut-off level will encourage more vigorous trade activity between countries as cheaper goods can be moved faster.

"The de minimis level for the Philippines is P10," Price said. "That's only 20 [US] cents."

In contrast, Thailand has a de minimis level of $35.

"[Thailand's level] is a good level to have because that's the price of most samples that have to be sent around," he said, referring to product samples that are sent to potential customers abroad as a prelude to placement of orders.

Ideally, the DHL regional chief said the de minimis level for any country should be between $100 and $150.

"We would want to see the Philippines' level go up," he added, noting that the present value, because of its low level, ensures that practically all shipments are subject to customs procedures.

He pointed out that a higher customs exemption level was the hallmark of more advanced economies where policy makers had decided to make money out of high transaction and investment volumes rather than through taxation or imposition of customs duties.

"Australia and Singapore are examples of this," he said. Price pointed out that the de minimis level of Australia stood at $600, high enough to exempt a significant amount of international shipment from inspection. This, he said, translated to higher trade.

The DHL official stressed that increased trade within Asean was the key in making the region more competitive with China, which has so far been receiving the bulk of trade and investment flows over the past years.

At present, trade within Asia has the effect of boosting the economic output of the countries involved by anywhere between 2 percent and 2.5 percent, he said.

Because of this, the firm has made a large bet in the region, with total investments over the last six years reaching $1.7 billion.

In the Philippines alone, DHL made over 1.7 million shipments in 2005 with total weight of 30 million kilos. Of this amount, eight million kilos were sent via its express shipment facilities.

Another 12,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) were shipped by sea during the same period.

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For more information, please call us at 526-0842 or visit our website **http://taxcredit.gov.ph.**

The Special Revalidation Program is conducted pursuant to Department Order No. 20-06 dated June 16, 2006.

(PDI-Dec. 11, 2006)

Questions of policies

From page B5

leading, it means he is hiding the real reason.

And the real reason for the shift to a unicameral parliament is—the national budget. By fusing the executive and legislative departments, and abolishing the Senate, parliament has total and absolute control of the national budget.

Under our present presidential system, the budget is a joint undertaking of the President, the House and the Senate. But the President disburses the budget. When a congressman wants to draw on his pork barrel, he has to go to the Department of Budget and Management, hat in hand. This process is what De Venecia wants to get rid of.

Parliament will design, propose, approve and disburse the national budget. The budget will be one huge pork barrel. The greedy majority and the equally greedy minority will feed from the some trough.

How then can De Venecia claim that the parliamentary system will erase graft and corruption? Three renowned international polling firms have reported that the 20 most corrupt nations in the world (Indonesia among them) are all ruled under the parliamentary system.

And even if De Venecia can pull off his trick, what makes him think he will be elected prime minister? I have a case of beer that says, Danding Cojuangco, whose party now holds 63 seats in the House and can easily win more, will walk in as the first prime minister of the land. Who knows, maybe he is the one we need.

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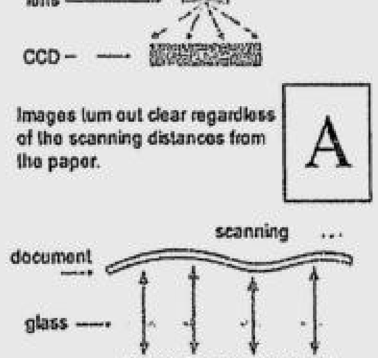
INQUIRER

Scanner Shopping Tips

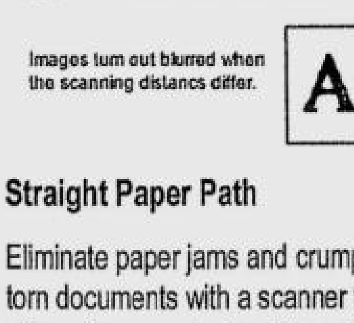
When it's time for you to invest in a document scanner, it pays to "look under the hood" to ensure that you get the best overall value for your money. Here are the key features that contribute to excellent image quality, speed, ease of use, and long scanner life.

Use of CCD Technology

Advanced CCD technology enables a scanner to create sharp images from documents that are uneven, bent or creased. A high-quality CCD imaging sensor also delivers vibrant color reproduction.



Images turn out clear regardless of the scanning distances from the paper.



Images turn out blurred when the scanning distancs differ.

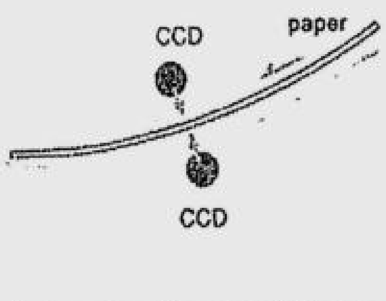
Straight Paper Path

Eliminate paper jams and crumpled or torn documents with a scanner that allows the paper to travel in a straight line. A straight paper path allows the scanner to handle more types of documents, from thin tracing paper to thick cardboard. A U-shaped paper path is a no-no!

Papers and Cards!
Single Straight Path

Simultaneous Duplex Scanning

Save time and enhance efficiency with a scanner that captures both sides of a document in a single pass. This also simplifies the way the documents are handled and reduces the possibility of getting the pages arranged in the wrong order.



Automatic Document Feeder

An Automatic Document Feeder (ADF) will save you from countless hours of tediously hand-feeding documents into the scanner and allows you to scan large volumes of documents at high speed for increased productivity.

Simple Maintenance and Durability

Make sure that the scanner you buy is very durable and easy to maintain, with consumable parts that can be easily replaced by the users themselves.

Speed, Capacity and Extras

Scanners are offered in a variety of models with different scanning speeds, paper handling capacities, connection interfaces and software utilities. Balance cost and capability by choosing the model that best fits your requirement.

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AUB plans to hold IPO in '07

Bank may apply for universal banking license

By Doris C. Dumlao

ASIA UNITED BANK PLANS TO RAISE P500 million through an initial public offering of about 10 percent of total shares most likely next year, bank officials said.

In a recent briefing, AUB senior vice president and head of treasury Antonio Agcaoili Jr. said the IPO was being considered not only to beef up capital but also to comply with the requirements imposed by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas on those applying for universal banking license.

At present, AUB operates with a regular commercial banking license. It interested in expanding into universal banking to be able to engage in non-allied activities open only to commercial banks with such an expanded license.

Agcaoili said the bank would also like to study other non-allied activities such as investment banking as well as investing in property ventures.

For instance, AUB's Taiwanese principals are putting up a 34-storey building at a prime spot across the Asian Development Bank in the Ortigas central business district.

He said AUB was interested in taking an equity interest in the P2.5-billion commercial property development, which is expected to be completed in 2008.

The condotel-type development, which broke ground three months ago, will become the bank's new head office. Ten floors will be allotted to AUB while 24 floors will cater to the tourism market.

Agcaoili said next year might be a good time to pursue the IPO plan to take advantage of the strong investor appetite. While the bank had considered going public in the past, plans did not push through because of sluggish market conditions.

He said AUB would not offer more than 10 percent of its outstanding shares as this was the minimum required to become a universal bank, if and when the bank would need the expanded license.

"We'll just test and see how the market perceives the bank... Later on, we can always do a secondary offering," he said.

The bank has a capital base of P5.5 billion, equivalent to a capital adequacy ratio of about 26 percent or more than double the regulatory requirement of 10 percent. Even with the regulators' adoption of more stringent capital adequacy requirements under Basel 2, he said the bank would have enough to comply with the requirement without having to pursue any fresh fund-raising.

Farmers seek probe of rice subsidy issues

A NORTHERN LUZON-BASED FARMERS group recently called on Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap to investigate reports that the subsidy scheme under the government's hybrid rice commercialization program "has not been beneficial to farmers and that the drop out rate among participants was high."

The West Tanat Multipurpose Cooperative (WTMC) earlier cited Yap 's move to junk the subsidy scheme in favor of infrastructure development.

WTMC spokesperson Melany Aquino said the move "would free up valuable government financial resources and stop massive waste of public funds on questionable subsidy schemes."

In a statement, Aquino urged Yap to conduct an investigation on the preferred supplier subsidy scheme under the program. She said the farm sector wanted a full disclosure on how a single hybrid rice seed supplier was selected to provide the seed inputs with government subsidies without public bidding.

Aquino also called on Yap to investigate reports that the hybrid rice seeds provided by this supplier "did not meet farmers' expectations of productivity levels."

She also questioned reports that the Department of Agriculture had earmarked P2.5 billion for the subsidy scheme in 2007.

She said the money should not be used for the subsidy scheme but for the construction of grain driers, storage facilities and more farm-to-market roads. The funds should benefit farmers, not preferred suppliers, she added.

Stocks . . .

From page B1

AB Capital Securities also estimated that the full reversal of fortune would boost trading of Meralco to possibly 6 to 7 times next year's estimated earnings.

"A more important side note is that with Meralco's woes now behind them, coverage is expected to improve given a more transparent picture. Given no more provisions next year, we estimate Meralco to be trading at an attractive 6 to 7 times next year's estimate earnings," AB Capital Securities said.

The brokerage firm also said that other issues expected to benefit from this development are First Philippine Holdings Corp., which owns a 17 percent stake in Meralco, and Benpres Holdings Corp., which holds 46 percent in First Holdings.

Fund managers said investors were also likely to digest news on construction firm DMCI Holdings Inc. after its joint acquisition with the Metro Pacific Group of 84 percent of Maynilad Water Services Inc.

Stock analysts also anticipate some buying for potential window-dressing by end of the year. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

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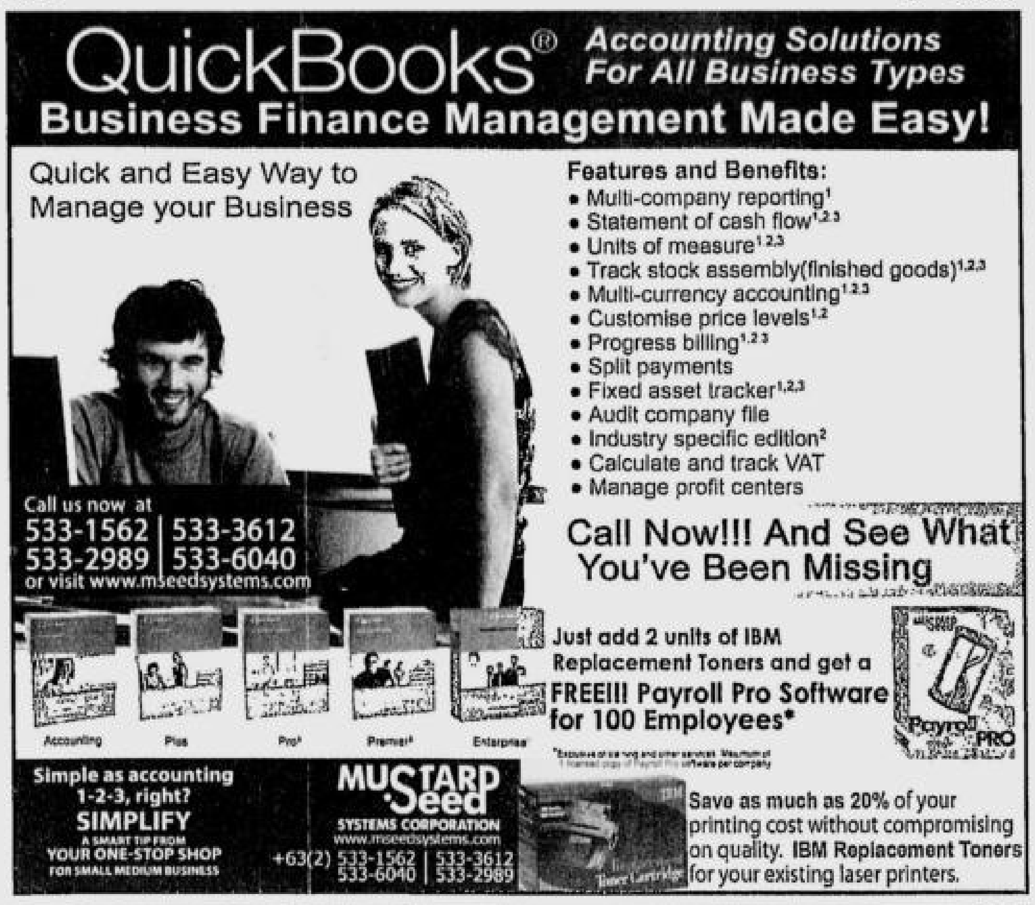

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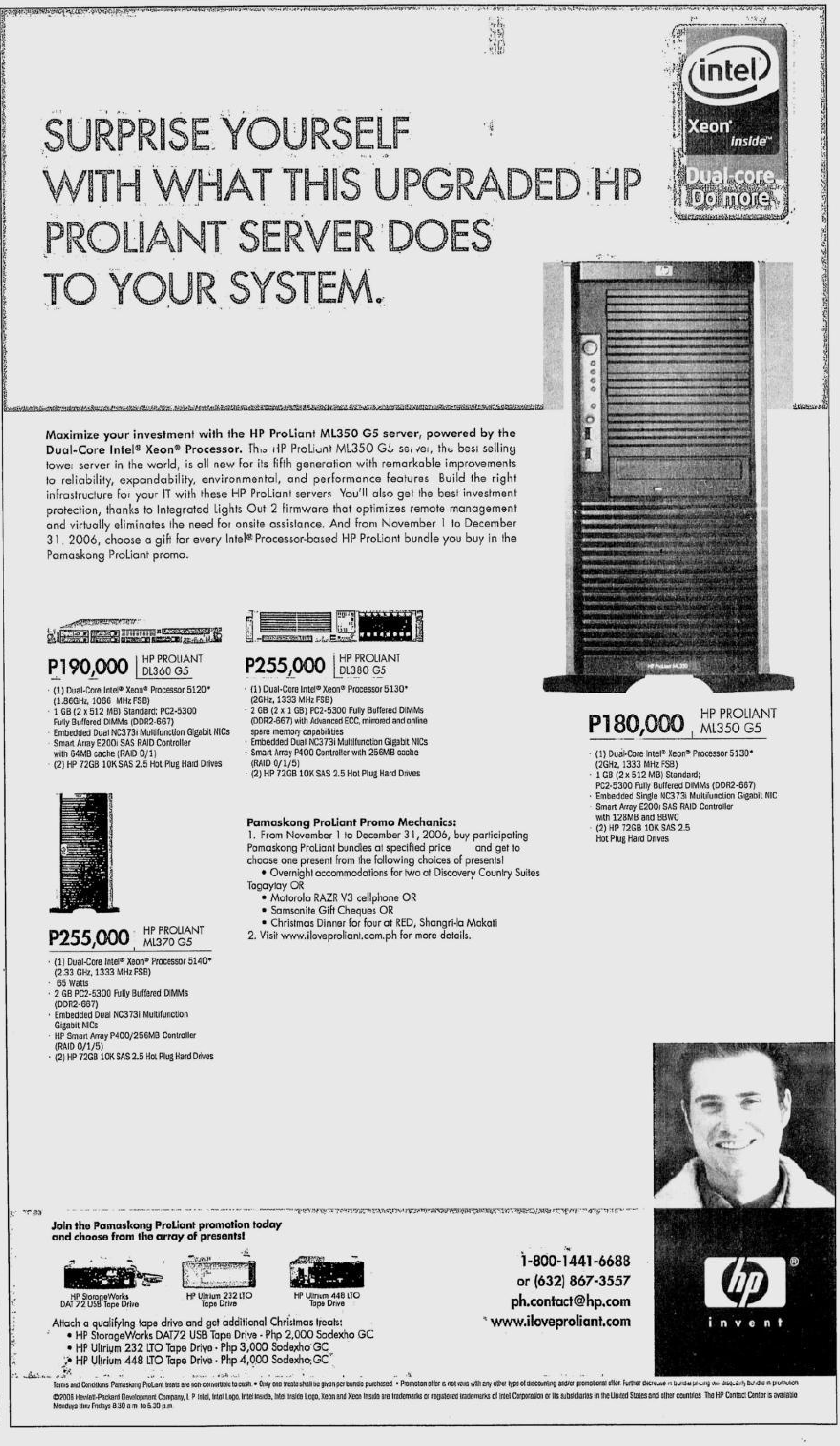

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Metro Pacific: Debt-free and raring to grow

Buys out minority shares of former holding firm

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

METRO PACIFIC INVESTMENTS Corp. (MPIC), the new debt-free holding firm that will replace Metro Pacific Corp. (MPC) of Hong Kong conglomerate First Pacific Co., has completed its offer to buy out minority shares of MPC.

In a disclosure last Friday, MPIC said it has acquired 20.5 percent, or 195.37 million common shares, of minority shareholders at a stipulated exchange ratio.

Based on the exchange ratio given, a total of 48.84 million MPIC shares and 146.52 million warrants will be issued by MPIC for the tendered shares.

MPIC earlier secured the approval of major MPC shareholders Metro Pacific Holdings Inc., Metro Pacific Resources Inc., Intalink and First Pacific International Ltd., to acquire 725.2 million common shares in MPC.

The shares were acquired using a four-to-one share swap, .or one MPIC share for every four MPC common shares.

MPIC was founded as a corporate vehicle to acquire and accelerate the growth of MPC's former real estate development subsidiary Landco Pacific Corp.

MPIC acquired 51 percent of the equity interest of MPC in Landco for P667.7 million.

To support the expansion of Landco's businesses, MPIC will raise capital worth P2 billion through a private placement of its shares in Metro Pacific Holdings Inc. or Metro Pacific Resources Inc., and Ashmore Global Special Situations Fund 2 Limited or other funds managed by Ashmore Investment Management Ltd.

The proposed private placement will be conducted following Metro Pacific Investments' tender offer.

The proceeds of the private placement will be used to increase MPIC's investment in Landco to possibly 87.3 percent.

After the private placement, Metro Pacific Investments is expected to have a capital of P3.1 billion.

MPIC earlier said it was looking at strategic sectors that will contribute to social infrastructure such as hospitals, energy and water utilities, as well as toll roads.

It marked significance progress toward this goal when MPIC, along with DMCI Holdings Inc., acquired the 84-percent stake of the government in Maynilad Water Services Inc.

BSP studies request of trust firms to invest in res

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS is studying a proposal to allow the banking system's P888-billion trust industry to tap the short-term investment instruments offered by the monetary authority.

BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla Jr. said the proposal came from the Trust Officers Association of the Philippines, whose members wanted to invest in the BSP's reserve deposit accounts (RDAs) and special deposit accounts (SDAs) on grounds that the trust industry pools enough cash from investors.

RDAs are new investment instruments created early this year by the BSP to allow banks to deposit funds with the BSP at market rates and provide them an alternative means of complying with liquidity or cash reserve requirements.

SDAs mature in one to two weeks while RDAs mature in at least three months. These instruments are currently restricted to the bank proper and not the trust department.

Before the SDAs and RDAs were put in place, banks had to buy government securities approved by the BSP to be able to comply with the liquidity reserve requirement.

With the new instruments, BSP gives banks the option to either buy government securities or deposit the equivale in deposit accounts with the cent

Trust operations currently a a big portion of the banking sys balance sheet items, or activiti to the financing or raising of m does not appear on the balance

The banking system's trust abilities include unit investm funds, common trust fund trusts, bonds issued under de

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 8, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7.4	7.4	7.4	7.4	6,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	43.5	44.5	43	44.5	1,802,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	62.5	63	62.5	63	739,000
China Banking Corp.	700	710	700	700	610
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.47	0.48	0.47	0.47	6,560,000
Equitable Pci Bank Inc.	78.5	79.5	78	79	88,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	48.5	50	48.5	50	2,939,600
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	58	58	58	58	500
Philippine National Bank	41.5	41.5	41.5	41.5	84,400
Phil. Savings Bank	46.5	48	46	48	84,400
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	25.5	27	25.5	27	154,700
Security Bank Corp.	66	66	66	66	41,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	50	50.5	50	50.5	4,300
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citisecoline.Com Inc.	4.75	4.9	4.75	4.9	519,000
First Metro Invest. Corp	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	2,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1620	1650	1620	1650	1,000
Pci Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.34	1.32	1.34	317,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	260	260	260	260	2,000
Sun Life Financial Inc	2110	2120	2110	2115	610
Ivantage Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	646,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	52	54	52	52	2,429,600
First Phil Hldgs Corp	54	59.5	54	59	6,377,100
Manila Electric Co. A	40	50	40	49.5	3,720,800
Manila Electric Co. B	41	51	41	51	10,595,200
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.6	9.9	9.6	9.8	3,078,000
Petron Corp.	4.05	4.15	4.05	4.1	3,863,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp	0.25	0.28	0.25	0.28	320,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.08	1.08	1.06	1.06	306,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	20.75	21	20.5	21	31,200
Jollibee Foods Corp.	41	41.5	41	41	1,134,600
Rfm Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	159,000
Roxas Holdings Inc	3	3	2.9	2.9	179,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.4	1,380,000
San Miguel Corp. A	65.5	66	65	66	58,900
San Miguel Corp. B	73	73	72.5	73	84,600
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.08	2.14	1.98	1.98	1,598,000
Universal Robina Corp.	19.75	19.75	19.5	19.5	955,900
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.06	1.06	1.02	1.02	13,819,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	3.05	3.2	3.05	3.15	691,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	7.5	7.6	7.5	7.5	3,549,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	5.9	6.1	5.9	6	58,000
Republic Cement Corp.	3.8	4.05	3.8	3.95	2,085,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc	5.1	5.1	5	5.1	8,656,000
Interphil Labs Inc. B	1	1	1	1	128,215,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.72	0.73	33,680,000
Picop Resources Inc	0.18	0.18	0.175	0.18	8,540,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	20,000,000
Ayala Corp.	487.5	490	485	490	78,980
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.6	0.62	0.6	0.61	860,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	6	6.2	6	6.1	4,620,000
Alliance Global Group Inc	10.5	10.75	10.5	10.75	6,700
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc	0.065	0.065	0.0575	0.0575	20,800,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.85	2.85	2.8	2.8	1,195,000
Apc Group, Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	8,040,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0095	0.01	0.0095	0.01	123,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.91	0.92	0.9	0.9	1,360,000
Atn Holdings Inc.	2.2	2.2	1.9	1.9	1,552,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp	3.05	3.1	3.05	3.05	156,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.1	1.18	1.1	1.16	79,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	13,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.88	2.08	1.86	2.08	111,614,000
Dmci Holdings Inc.	6.2	6.3	6	6.1	5,247,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	3.45	3.6	3.45	3.6	1,498,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.84	1.92	1.84	1.92	1,677,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc	9.3	9.3	9.1	9.2	91,000
Medco Holdings	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	220,000
Magnum Holdings Inc	4.7	4.85	4.45	4.5	1,201,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.72	1.72	1.6	1.68	2,076,000
Pacifica	0.019	0.02	0.019	0.02	1,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	700,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp	1.42	1.5	1.42	1.46	13,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	300,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.14	0.145	0.14	0.145	12,110,000
Sm Investments Corp.	290	292.5	282.5	292.5	291,510
South China Resources Inc	0.94	0.94	0.92	0.92	150,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.58	1.72	1.58	1.66	3,560,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.175	0.18	0.175	0.18	8,260,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	14.75	14.75	14.5	14.75	4,434,700
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	70,000
Belle Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	2,787,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.74	1.78	2,848,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.39	0.39	1,650,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.1	3.25	3.1	3.25	1,290,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	45,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.34	470,000
Elb Realty Developers Inc	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	60,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.53	0.54	0.53	0.54	13,670,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	101,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.72	1.74	1.7	1.72	2,311,000
Interport Res.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	392,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	208,000,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	22,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.51	0.51	0.46	0.48	6,440,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	100,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.24	2.32	2.24	2.3	164,421,000
Mrc Allied Ind. Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	20,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	400,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	1,925,100
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.7	0.71	0.61	0.67	54,030,000
Sm Development Corp.	2.46	2.46	2.34	2.44	418,000
Sm Prime Holdings Inc.	9.8	9.9	9.7	9.8	2,777,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.55	0.56	0.55	0.56	70,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	19.75	21	19.75	21	147,600
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp	1	1	1	1	83,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	1.6	1.62	1.58	1.6	8,399,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1255	1255	1250	1250	12,240
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	5.9	6	5.9	6	1,406,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2455	2465	2445	2455	75,380
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.185	0.195	0.185	0.185	12,070,000
Imperial Res.	0.017	0.018	0.017	0.018	8,600,000
Ionics Inc.	2.02	2.04	2	2.04	139,000
Ipvg Corp.	4.4	4.55	4.2	4.45	3,128,000
Ism Communications Corp.	0.055	0.0575	0.055	0.0575	2,000,000
Music Semiconductors Corp	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1,000
Transpacific Broadband	5.2	5.6	5.1	5.6	480,000
Philweb Corp.	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.031	6,700,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.18	1.2	1.16	1.2	34,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	19.25	19.25	19.25	19.25	26,300
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	80,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	6,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.22	2.22	2.2	2.2	630,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.33	1,050,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.56	0.57	0.56	0.56	910,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	9	9	9	9	4,000

Ipeople Inc

Jth Davies Holdings
Macroasia Corp
Paxys, Inc.
Philcomsat Holdings

Apex Mining Co. Inc
Apex Mining Co. Inc
Abra Mining & Indust
Atlas Cons. Min & De
Benguet Corp. A
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December 10, 200
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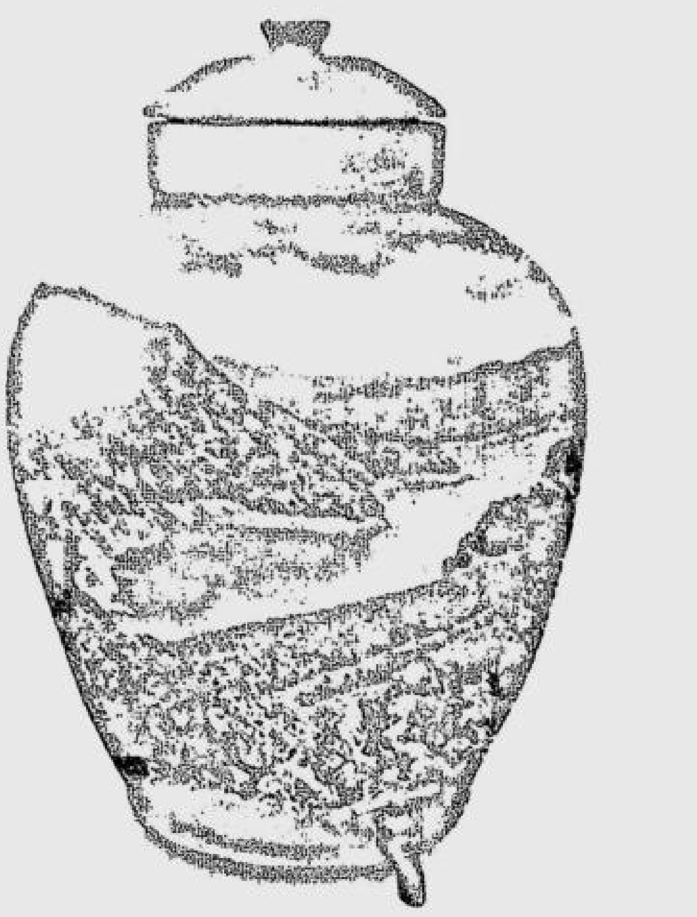

ANGAT-IPO WATERSHED
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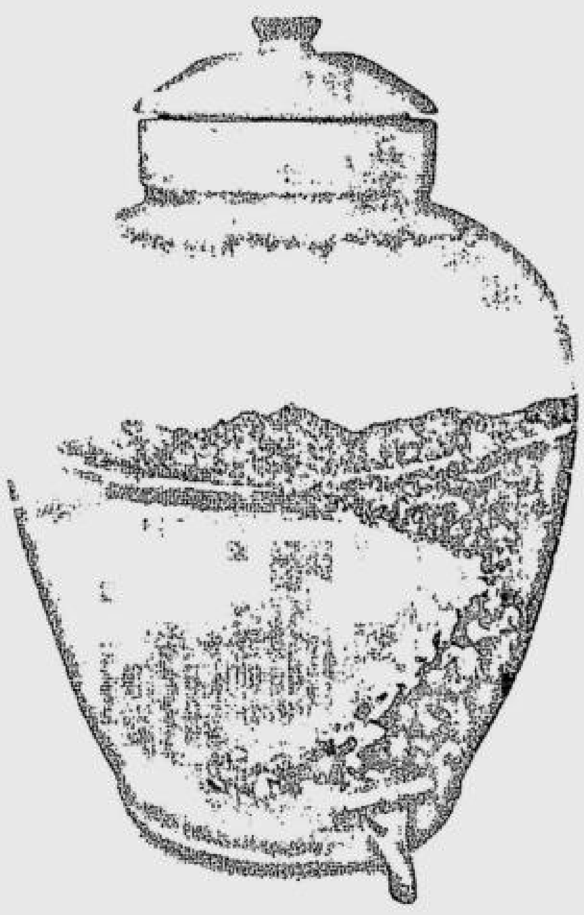
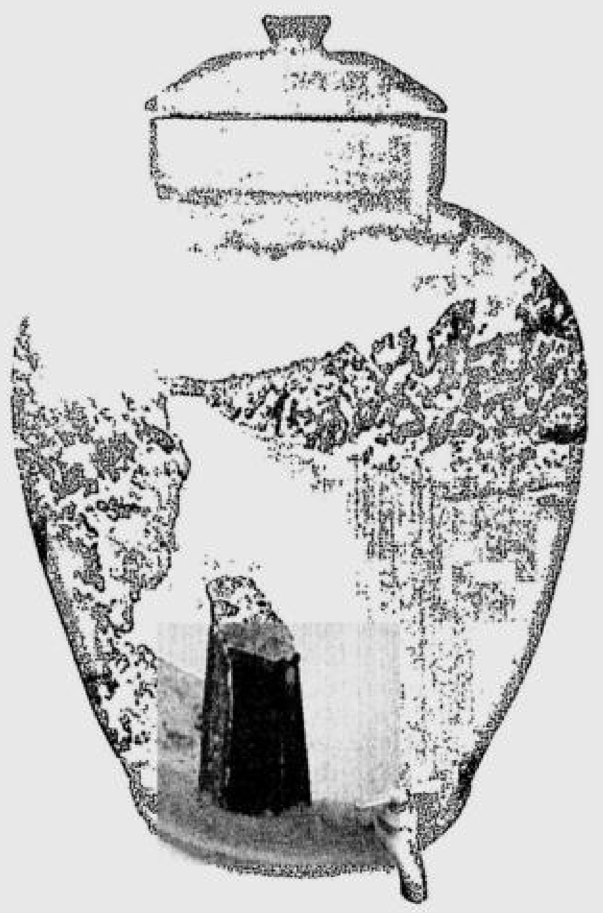


MAGAT WATERSHED
Nueva Vizcaya



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or mortgage as well as funds under custodianship and safekeeping, escrow, and investment management.

"We are looking at both the legal and business aspects. The (BSP's) treasury (department) is now looking at it," Espenilla said.

"We're studying whether it is legally feasible, and if it's feasible, if it's advisable from our policy standpoint," he said.

BPI gets nod to open London branch

From page B1

be BPI's gateway to other markets in Europe. BPI will assess its European operations after two years and determine the merits of expanding into other countries in the region.

Without a full branch, Montinola said BPI could not offer its wide array of banking services.

"From a practical point of view, if somebody, for instance wants a housing loan, we can't even talk to them," he said.

Earlier this year, BPI also launched the first euro-denominated mutual fund in the Philippines, targeting residents seeking to diversify their investment portfolio.

BPI Asset Management Inc. said it believed the stable interest rate regime in the Europe as opposed to the monetary tightening cycle in the United States was providing a good opportunity for bond investors. *Doris C. Dumlao*

	2.95	3	2.9	3	320,000
	DIVERSIFIED SERVICES				
	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	400
	2.26	2.26	2.18	2.18	338,000
	18.25	18.25	17.5	17.5	138,000
rp.	1.38	1.4	1.38	1.4	33,000
	MINING				
	6.2	6.3	6.1	6.3	350,000
	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.4	176,000
	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	83,700,000
	8.1	8.4	8.1	8.3	2,701,000
	9	9	9	9	39,000
A	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	15,920,000
B	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.26	8,290,000
	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	403,800,000
	0.023	0.023	0.022	0.023	175,200,000
	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.011	622,000,000
	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	2,192,000
	20	20	19	19	171,500
Co.	0.56	0.57	0.55	0.56	2,220,000
	0.92	0.96	0.91	0.96	6,280,000
	OIL				
	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	2,430,000
	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	12,000,000
	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	2,100,000
	0.96	0.97	0.96	0.97	600,000
	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.99	210,000
	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	57,000

CURRENCIES

Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
Dollar	0.752219	1.000000	49.4880
Yen	0.006532	0.008683	0.4297
Pound	1.477433	1.964100	97.1994
Dollar	0.096856	0.128761	6.3721
Franc	0.629683	0.837100	41.4264
Dollar	0.654787	0.870474	43.0780
Dollar	0.489121	0.650237	32.1789
Dollar	0.594498	0.790326	39.1117
Dinar*	1.995435	2.652731	131.2784
Rial	0.200581	0.266652	13.1961
Dollar	0.487536	0.648130	32.0747
Rupiah	0.000083	0.000110	0.0054
Baht	0.021159	0.028129	1.3920
Dirham	0.204813	0.272279	13.4745
Euro	1.000000	1.329400	65.7893
Won	0.000823	0.001094	0.0541
Yuan**	0.096147	0.127818	6.3255
Kroner	0.134138	0.178323	8.8248
Rupee	0.016889	0.022452	1.1111
Ringgit	0.212431	0.282406	13.9757
New Peso	0.069052	0.091798	4.5429
Dollar	0.518808	0.689703	34.1320
Rupee	0.012360	0.016431	0.8131
Rand	0.107154	0.142450	7.0496
Kroner	0.110554	0.146970	7.2733
Pound	0.014491	0.019264	0.9533
Nt Dollar	0.023277	0.030945	1.5314

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SELLING		BUYING	
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	550K	ALABANG A	1.2M
CANLUBANG GOLF CLUB	450K	BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	500K
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	100K	CAMP JOHN HAY	300K
COUNTRY CLUB@TAGAYTAY	340K	CEBU COUNTRY CLUB	1.2M
EAGLERIDGE B	260K	CLUB FILIPINO	90K
EAGLERIDGE C	330K	EAGLERIDGE B	PLS. CALL
LUISITA GOLF	300K	EAGLERIDGE C	300K
MANILA POLO CLUB	2.750M	MANILA GOLF CORP.	12.4M
MANILA SOUTHWOODS A	295K	MANILA GOLF IND	PLS. CALL
MANILA YACHT CLUB	200K	MANILA POLO CLUB	PLS. CALL
METROCLUB A/B	130K/170K	MANILA SOUTHWOODS B	630K
MIMOSA IND	240K	MIMOSA C3	550K
MT. MALARAYAT A	200K	MIMOSA IND	200K
MT. MALARAYAT C	400K	MT. MALARAYAT C	350K
PUERTO AZUL	PLS. CALL	ORCHARD A	PLS. CALL
ORCHARD B	310K	SHERWOOD HILLS B	PLS. CALL
ORCHARD C	400K	SPA & LODGE	450K
QUEZON CITY SPORTS	150K	STA. ELENA A	PLS. CALL
SPLENDIDO	200K	STA. ELENA B	1.8M
STA. ELENA A	1.5M	TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	600K
THE PALMS	300K	THE PALMS	PLS. CALL
TOWER CLUB IND/CORP.	PLS. CALL	VALLE VERDE	85K
VALLE VERDE	95K	VALLEY GOLF	200K
WACK WACK	PLS. CALL	WACK WACK	6.5M

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CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club A/B*	1,100,000/1,250,000*	1,000,000
Alta Vista A/B*/Corp.**	-	300,000/Pls. Call*/Pls Call**
Baguio Country Club	-	500,000
Camp John Hay	Pls. Call	300,000
Canlubang Golf	-	420,000
Canyon Woods	100,000	-
Capitol Hills	50,000	-
Cebu Country Club	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Celebrity Sports	Pls. Call	90,000
Club Filipino	90,000	
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	280,000*/350,000**	Pls. Call*
Eastridge A/B*	Pls. Call	-
Evercrest	55,000	-
Fairways & Bluewater	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	90,000/150,000*	Pls. Call*
Luisita Golf	Pls. Call	
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls. Call	12,000,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	11,600,000
Manila Polo	3,000,000	2,700,000
Manila Southwoods A/B*	Pls. Call*	
Makati Sports Club A	200,000	150,000
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	200,000	-
Metropolitan Club A/B*	160,000	
Mimosa Ind./C2*/C3**	Pls. Call	Pls. Call/550,000**
Mt. Malarayat A	180,000	
Orchard A/B*/C**	180,000/Pls. Call*/350,000**	150,000/300,000*
Punta Fuego	400,000	350,000
Quezon City Sports Club	150,000	Pls. Call
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	60,000/170,000*/250,000**	Pls. Call*
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Royale Tagaytay CC	55,000	-
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/150,000**	
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	-	1,300,000
Subic Golf	190,000	
Summit Point A	300,000	
The Palms Country Club	400,000	350,000
Country Club at Tagaytay Highlands	320,000	
Tagaytay Highlands	650,000	620,000
Tagaytay Midlands	650,000	600,000
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Tower Club A/B*	150,000/180,000*	-
Valley Golf	220,000	-
Valle Verde Ind.	100,000	
Wack Wack Golf	Pls. Call	Pls. Call

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CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,100,000	1,000,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	-	1,050,000
Anvaya Cove Beach and Nature Club	Please Call	-
Baguio Country Club	550,000	450,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	40,000	
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	60,000	-
Camp John Hay	-	300,000
Canlubang	500,000	420,000
Capitol Hills	40,000	-
Cebu Country Club	1,600,000	1,400,000
Celebrity Sports Club	120,000	100,000
Club Filipino	100,000	90,000
Eagleridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	-
Forest Hills "A"	100,000	
Forest Hills "B"	150,000	
Forest Hills "C"	190,000	
Luisita Golf "A"	350,000	
Makati Sports Club "A"	180,000	
Makati Sports Club "B"	200,000	-
Manila Golf (Corporate)	12,500,000	12,000,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	-	11,600,000
Manila Polo	2,750,000	2,600,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	310,000	-
Manila Southwoods "B"	750,000	630,000
Manila Yacht Club	250,000	-
Mimosa (Individual)	230,000	200,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	650,000	550,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	180,000	-
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	350,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "A"	220,000	160,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	310,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "C"	350,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	150,000	140,000
Spa & Lodge	580,000	480,000
Sta. Elena "A"	-	1,300,000
Sta. Elena "B"	2,140,000	1,800,000
Subic Bay Golf	200,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	320,000	290,000
Tagaytay Highlands	650,000	600,000
Tagaytay Midlands	640,000	600,000
Valle Verde (individual)	100,000	-
Valley Golf	200,000	180,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	7,000,000	6,600,000

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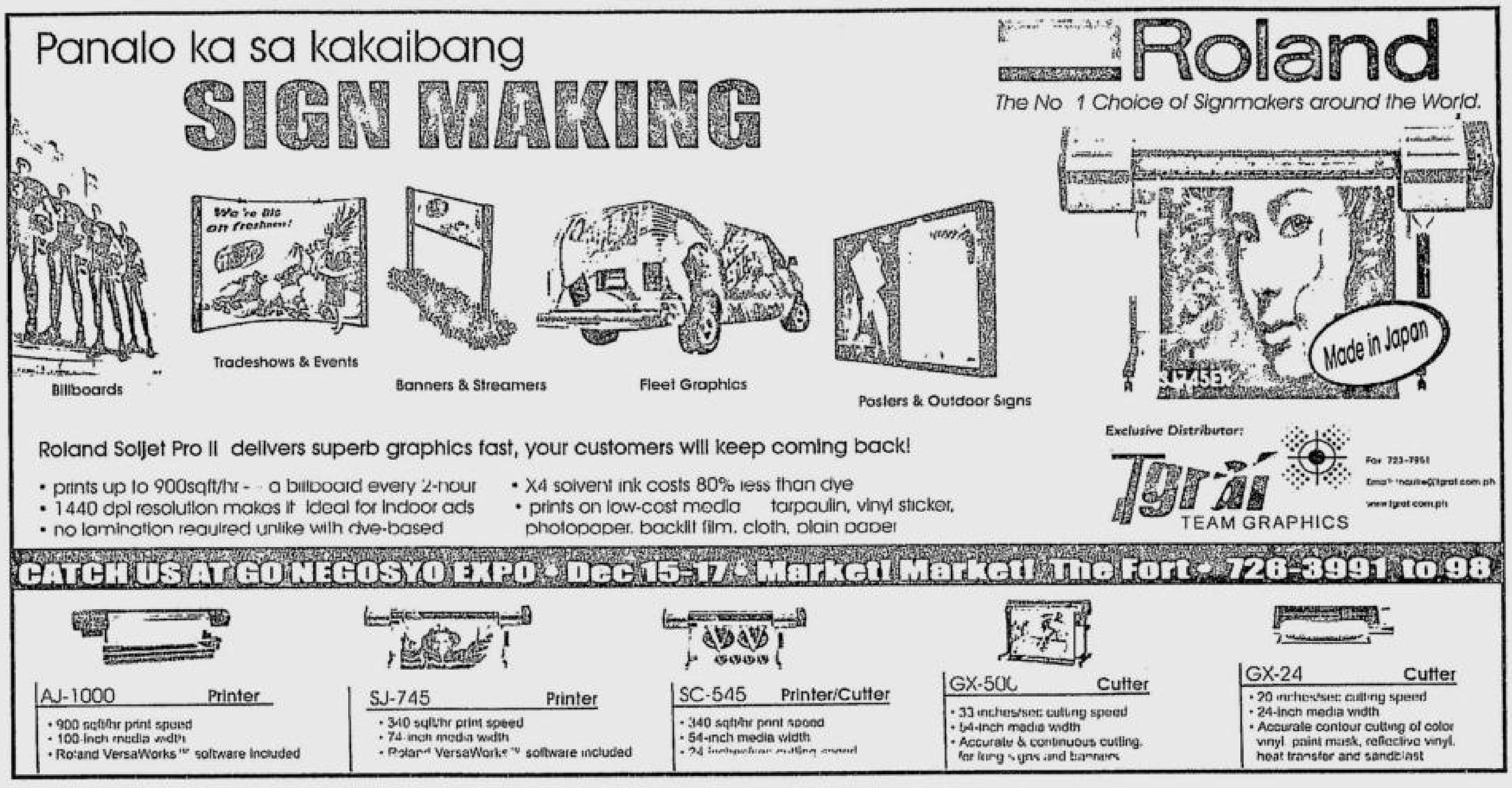

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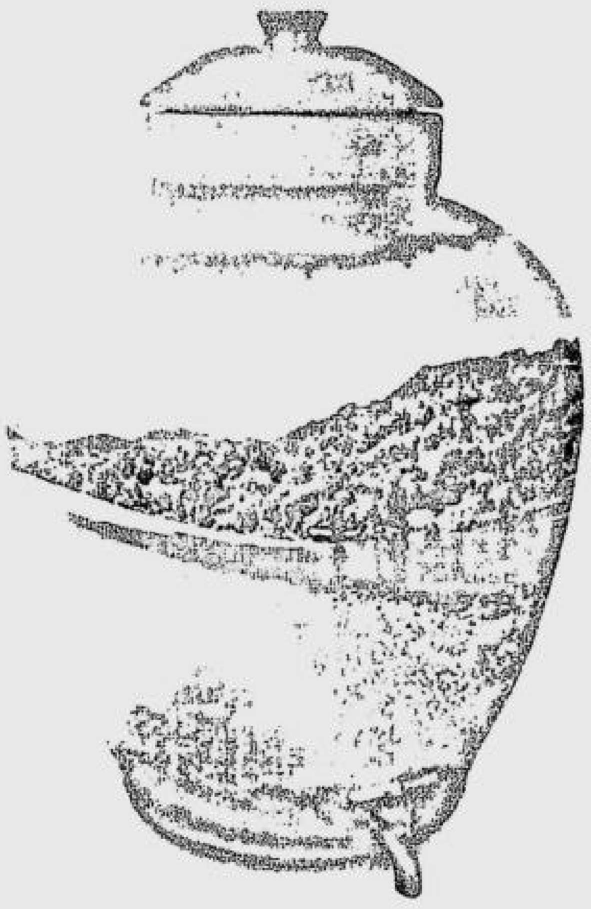
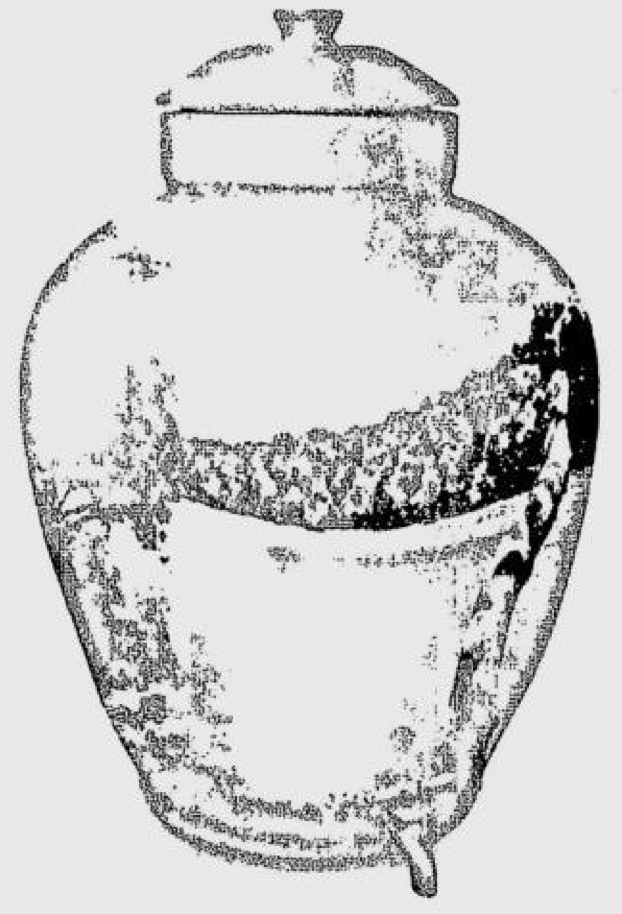


BINAHAAN WATERSHED
Leyte

SILWAY WATERSHED
South Cotabato



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Ang Bangkong May Damdaming Bayan

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Republic of the Philippines
11th Judicial Region
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
Branch 10, Davao City

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION FOR CORPORATE REHABILITATION AND FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE REHABILITATION PLAN OF ALL ASIABANK CORPORATION-YOUR COMMUNITY THRIFT BANK (DAVAO), INC.,

SP. PROC. NO. 8930-06

ALL ASIABANK DEPOSITORS ASSOCIATION, INC.,
Petitioner.
x- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -x

STAY ORDER

Petitioner All Asiabank Depositor's Association, Inc. (AABDAI, for brevity) filed on November 10, 2006, herein petition alleging that it is a non-stock, non-profit association of All Asiabank Corporation (AABC, for brevity) depositors with office address at Sashmir Gasul Marketing, Monteverde St., Davao City, that the purpose of filing instant petition is for corporate rehabilitation as creditors holding at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the total liabilities of the debtor corporation AABC. On October 26, 1999, All AsiaCapital and Trust Corporation (AACTC, for brevity) closed the purchase of a 34-year old Davao-based Banco Davao and launched it under a new name, All Asia Bank Corporation --Your Community Thrift Bank. In an effort to improve the bank's financial condition, AACTC (now Advent Capital and Finance Corporation), the majority owner of AABC managed to spring back to profitability in 2000 by raising the equity base to PhP 353 Million and rebuilding its earning assets based on a rehabilitation plan approved by the Monetary Board. However, AABC's financial recovery was short-lived when it encountered liquidity pressures through above-normal withdrawals propelled by adverse publicity against the bank's mother company, AACTC. To cater to the abnormal deposit withdrawals of Php 280 Million, it sold the bulk of its high earning assets in 2000 and accessed the BSP Special Liquidity Facility rendering it groping for capital funds; that in 2001, in-house financial statement showed a net loss of Php 80.7 Million slicing Stockholder's Equity to Php 69.3 at yearend; that when the BSP imputed the booking of required valuation reserves in the amount of Php 315 Million, it was in an impaired capital position; that its receivable from the All AsiaCapital group accounted for a significant portion of the required valuation reserves, which AACTC failed to remit; and that for failure of to find a new investor or infuse the required capital, AACTC surrendered its license that prompted BSP to close the banking business of AABC. Upon closure, The Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC, for brevity), took over the bank as receiver and initiated activities to undertake pay-outs of insured deposits; that barely 2 1/2 months, PDIC conducted a bidding to sell the bank but the same failed; that the Rehabilitation Plan submitted by AABDAI was not approved by the PDIC hence in 2002, PDIC recommended its liquidation; that the latest liquidation report available from the PDIC to date is yearend 2004; and that this failure to update financial statement annually, the latter acted as if it does not have accountability to anyone. Therefore, the depositors of AABC who organized themselves under AABDAI, have no remedy left to protect their hard earned deposits other than filing Instant Rehabilitation Plan.

Finding the petition together with its annexes sufficient in form and substance, the Court hereby:

1. Appoints Ramon M. de Vera of 3 Sta. Elvira, Capitolyo, Pasig City, as Rehabilitation Receiver with a bond in the amount of TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (P200,000.00);
2. Stays the enforcement of all claims especially by the PDIC, whether for money or otherwise and whether such enforcement is by court action or otherwise, against the debtor bank, its guarantors and sureties not solidarily liable with the debtor;
3. Prohibits the Central Bank, through its Monetary Board, the PDIC from selling, encumbering, transferring, or disposing in any manner any of debtor bank's properties except in the ordinary course of business;
4. Prohibits All Asiabank Corp., as well as the PDIC from making any payment of the bank's liabilities outstanding as of the date of filing of the petition;
5. Directs the payment in full of all administrative expenses incurred after the issuance of the Stay Order;
6. Fixes the initial hearing of the petition on January 5, 2007, at 8:30 o'clock in the morning;
7. Directs petitioner to cause the publication of this Order in the Philippine Daily Inquirer once a week for two (2) consecutive weeks starting not later than seven (7) days from the issuance of this Order;
8. Directs all creditors and all interested parties (including the Securities and Exchange Commission) to file and serve with the court and on the petitioner a verified comment on or opposition to the petition, with supporting affidavits and documents, not later than ten (10) days before the date of the initial hearing and putting them on notice that their failure to do so will bar them from participating in the proceedings;
9. Directing the creditors and interested parties to secure from the court copies of the petition and its annexes to enable them to file their comment on or opposition to the petition and to prepare for the initial hearing on January 5, 2007, otherwise they will be barred from participating in the proceedings of this case.

The petitioner is hereby directed to immediately serve a copy of this Order and the Petition *(with annexes)* to Ramon M. de Vera, the Rehabilitation Receiver, who is requested to manifest his acceptance or non-acceptance of his appointment and if he accepts said appointment, to take his oath before the Branch Clerk of Court of this Court and post the corresponding bond as aforementioned in favor of the petitioner to guarantee the faithful performance of his functions as receiver, on or before the date of initial hearing, January 5, 2007.

SO ORDERED.

GIVEN IN CHAMBERS this 21st day of November 2006, at Davao City, Philippines

(Sgd.) **JAIME V. QUITAIN**
JUDGE

(PDI - December 4 & 11, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON AUDIT
Regional Office No. IX
Cabatangan Hills, Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Commission on Audit (COA), Regional Office No. 9, Zamboanga City, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified at least Small B by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract	COA Satellite Office Building
Location	Ipil Heights, Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay
Brief Description	Construction of COA Satellite Office Building
Approved Budget for The Contract (ABC)	Php 14,928,578.72
Contract Duration	One Hundred Fifty (150) Calendar Days

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid. Eligibility check, evaluation of bids, and post-qualification shall be in accordance with the provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including application for Eligibility	December 14, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	December 14, 2006
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	December 20, 2006
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	December 21, 2006
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	December 22, 2006 to January 11, 2007
6. Pre-Bid Conference	January 30, 2007
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	February 12, 2007

The BAC will issue Eligibility Forms at the address below, upon their submission of a LOI, and upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P100.00 to the COA Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements and may also obtain the results of Eligibility Check at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P5,000.00 to the COA Cashier.

COA assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

November 30, 2006.

(Sgd.) **FERMO T. AVILA**
Regional Cluster Director
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

Mr. APOLINAR SAGARAL
Head, BAC Secretariat
COMMISSION ON AUDIT-Regional Office No. 9
Cabatangan, Zamboanga City
Telephone No. (062) 991-6892 / Fax No. 991-3036
(PDI-Dec. 4 & 11, 2006)

PNOC EXPLORATION CORPORATION

Building 1, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Telephone Nos. 893 6001 to 47 local 2104
Direct Line: 840 1614/Fax No.: (632) 840 1619

PNOC
The Energy Company

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC Exploration Corporation (PNOC EC), through its Corporate Budget, intends to apply the sum of Four Million Six Hundred Fourteen Thousand Six Hundred Ten and 88/100 Pesos (Php 4,614,610.88) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for **THE COMPANY'S MALANGAS COAL PROJECT'S JANITORIAL AND GENERAL MANPOWER SERVICES CONTRACT** (the "Project"). Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the bid opening.

PNOC EC now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the **janitorial and general manpower services contract for the Company's Malangas Coal Project** located in Malangas, Zamboanga Sibugay Province. The contract duration for the Project is one (1) year.

Bidding will be conducted though open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act", and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty (60%) precent interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only bids from bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the Project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders from PNOC EC's Procurement Section (c/o Ms. J. C. Fabian) starting December 7, 2006 at the PNOC EC Head Office located in Building 1, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of One Thousand Pesos (Php1,000.00).

For purpose of clarifying certain issues, a Pre-bid Conference shall be held on **December 18, 2006 at 3:00 P.M.** at the Malangas Coal Terminal in Malangas, Zamboanga Sibugay Province.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be submitted in three (3) sets each to PNOC EC's Bids and Awards Committee not later than **3:00 p.m. on January 4, 2007**. The bids including the eligibility requirements shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter. Late bids shall not be accepted.

PNOC EC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

This publication is also posted in our website at www.pnoc-ec.com.ph and in the DBM website at www.procurementservice.net.

The Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--Dec. 7 & 11, 2006)

ANECO
AGUSAN DEL NORTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Km. 2, J.C. Aquino Avenue, Butuan City
Tel Nos. (085) 341-9034; (085) 341-7935; Fax No. (085) 342-6000

INVITATION TO BID

The Agusan del Norte Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ANECO) wishes to invite interested parties to BID for the supply of the following:

A. Distribution Transformer (brand new - preferably Philec brand)

3 kva	20 units	
5 kva	20 units	
10 kva	20 units	
15 kva	20 units	
25 kva	10 units	
		ABC
B. Boom Truck (Head Nissan) 6.5 capacity	1 unit	P 550,000.00
C. Self Loading Truck (Isuzu Forward)	1 unit	P 500,000.00

Opening of bid proposals will be conducted on December 22, 2006 at ANECO Conference Room at 2:00P.M.

ANECO reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any minor defect in the proposal and accept the offer that will be evaluated to be the most advantageous to the cooperative.

(Sgd.) RODOLFO L. RANOCO
BAC Chairman

Noted: (Sgd.) HORACIO T. SANTOS
General Manager

(PDI - December 11 & 12, 2006)

NOTICE TO STOCKHOLDERS
OF
CAGAYAN DE ORO COLLEGE, INC.

PRE-EMPTIVE RIGHTS OFFERING

Please be notified that on 08 May 2006, the Board of Trustees and Stockholders of the Cagayan De Oro College, Inc. (the "Corporation") approved an increase in the authorized capital stock of the Corporation from Fifty Million Pesos (Php 50,000,000.00) to One Hundred Twenty Million Pesos (Php 120,000,000.00) and to issue 350,000 new shares at the price of Php 100.00 per share.

All stockholders of record as of 08 May 2006 may exercise their pre-emptive rights and subscribe to the new shares of the Corporation at the price of Php 100.00 per share in proportion to their shareholdings, or approximately 1.2 new shares for every existing share, with no fractional shares allowed, on or before 05 January 2007, 4:00 p.m. under the following rules:

1. Subscribing stockholders must submit, on or before the said deadline to Ms. Cecille Laguna at the Ground Floor, Administration Building, Cagayan De Oro College, Inc., Carmen, Cagayan De Oro City, or to Ms. Caroline Castro at the 12th Floor, The Phinma Plaza, 39 Plaza Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati City, a duly executed and notarized Subscription Agreement, a form of which will be provided upon request.

   Subscribing stockholders must verify from any of the above-named persons on the exact number of new shares to which they are entitled to subscribe, based on the outstanding capital stock represented by 290,780 shares.

2. Payment of subscriptions must be in full, together with the corresponding amount covering documentary stamp taxes, delivered together with the said Subscription Agreement, to any of the persons named above.

3. Subscribers who have advances existing in the books of the Corporation as of 08 May 2006 may pay for their subscriptions using the said advances, by delivering together with the said Subscription Agreement, a duly executed and notarized Deed of Assignment of Receivables, a form of which will be provided upon request.

4. Stockholders who do not exercise their pre-emptive rights or who exercise said rights only partially, shall be considered to have waived any right to subscribe to any remaining shares. The Corporation may offer and sell any and all the remaining shares not covered by any subscription to any other person or entity at the same price of Php 100.00 per share and under the same terms.

5. The increase in authorized capital stock and pre-emptive rights offering are subject to the approval of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

For any inquiries on this matter, you may contact Ms. Raizza Levasty, at telephone number (02) 870-0247.

Please be guided accordingly.

(Sgd.) **MELITON B. SALAZAR, JR.**
President

(PDI-Dec. 11, 2006)

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- Excellent in both oral and written English communication

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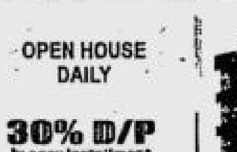

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Ang aming
pinakamamahal na si

AUGUSTO S. STA. ANA, MD, FPCHA

ay kapiling na ngayon ng Poong Maykapal.
Siya ay pumanaw noong
ika-10 ng Disyembre 2006
sa edad na 86.

Ating ipagdasal ang kanyang
walang hanggang kapayapaan
at kaligayahan.

Burol : Arlington Memorial Chapels, Inc.
(The Garden Chapels)
1354 C. Raymundo Ave.
cor. Mercedes Ave., Pasig City

Libing : 12 Disyembre 2006
1:00 ng hapon sa
Pasig Catholic Cemetery

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28

MILAGROS S. CASTILLO

Died peacefully in the grace of our Lord on December 9, 2006 at the age of 74.

Her bereaved family, relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Aurora A Chapel in Arlington Pasig.

Interment will be on December 13, 2006 at the Loyola Memorial Park Marikina.

CLASSIFIEDS

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION
BRANCH 214
MANDALUYONG CITY

IN THE MATTER OF THE RECONSTITUTION OF THE ORIGINAL TRANSFER CERTIFICATE OF TITLE NO. 20711 IN THE REGISTRY OF DEEDS OF MANDALUYONG CITY

ARLE REALTY & DEVELOPMENT CORP.,
Petitioner

-versus- LRC NO.: MC-06-383

THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE LAND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY AND THE REGISTER OF DEEDS OF MANDALUYONG CITY,
Respondents

x---x

ORDER

This is a verified petition for the reconstitution of the original Transfer Certificate of Title No. 20711 filed by petitioner, Arle Realty & Development Corporation through its authorized representative Mr. Efren R. Jabla, under whose name a parcel of land is registered, more particularly described to wit:

TRANSFER CERTIFICATE OF
TITLE NO. 20711

"A parcel of land (Lot 3-A of the subd. Plan Psd-39505, being a portion of Lot 3, plan Pcs-3430, GLRO Rec. Nos. 699, 875, 917), situated in the Bo. of Wack-Wack, Mp. Of Mandaluyong, Prov. of Rizal. Bounded on the NE. by Lot 1, plan Pcs-3430, on the SE by Circumferential Road (Lot 5, Pcs-2338), and on the SW and NW. by Lot 3-B of the subd. Plan. Beginning at a point marked 1 on plan, being N. 48 deg. 48' E., 859.35 m. from BLLM 1, Wack-Wack; thence s. 17 deg. 30'W., 37.28 m. to point 2, thence N. 72 deg. 30'W., 67.00 m. to point 3; thence N. 17 deg. 30'E., 37.28 m to point 4; thence s. 72 deg. 30'E., 67.00 m. to the point of beginning; containing an area of TWO THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED NINETY EIGHT (2,498) SQUARE METERS, more or less. All points referred to are indicated on the plan and on the ground, points 1 and 4 are marked by old PLS cyl. conc. mons. 15x60 cm.; and points 2 and 3 by PLS cyl. conc. mons. 15x60 cm.; bearings true; dec. 0 deg. 50'E., date of the original survey, April 8, 1920-Feb. 21, 1921 and that of the subd. survey, October 1, 1953.

The petition alleges in substance that petitioner is the registered owner of a parcel of land located at Wack-Wack, Mandaluyong City covered by TCT No. 20711. That on June 2, 2005, petitioner executed a deed assigning said parcel of land in favor of Jans Realty and Development Corporation in exchange for one hundred thousand (100,000) shares of stocks in said corporation. However, upon presentment of said deed to the Registry of Deeds of Mandaluyong City for registration on June 10, 2005, the petitioner was informed that the original Transfer Certificate of Title No. 20711 was lost and for such reason the petitioner seeks for the reconstitution of the original Transfer Certificate of Title No. 20711 pursuant to Republic Act No. 26, as amended by Republic Act 6732 in relation to Section 110 of Presidential Decree No. 1529. Petitioner's source for the reconstitution is the owner's duplicate copy thereof which is presently in its possession. In support of the petition, the petitioner submits the affidavit of Mr. Efren R. Jabla, the General Manager of the petitioner.

ACCORDINGLY, the petition being sufficient in form and substance let the hearing of this case be set on February 5, 2007 at 8:30 o'clock in the morning at the Regional Trial Court, Branch 214, G/F Hall of Justice Mandaluyong City Hall, Mandaluyong City, at which date, time and place mentioned, all interested persons who may be affected thereby are hereby directed to appear and show cause, if any, or to file there opposition thereto as to why said petition should not be granted.

Let a copy of this Order be published at the petitioner's expense twice (2) in successive issues of the Official Gazette and at the Philippine Daily Inquirer, a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines and the same be posted at three (3) conspicuous places, at Mandaluyong City Hall, the lobby of the court's sala and on the property itself, at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of hearing.

Finally, let a copy of this order together with the petition and its annexes be served upon the Register of Deeds of Mandaluyong City, the Land Registration Authority and the Bureau of Lands.

SO ORDERED.

Mandaluyong City
September 20, 2006

(Sgd.) EDWIN D. SORONGON
Judge

(PDI - Dec. 11 & 18, 2006)

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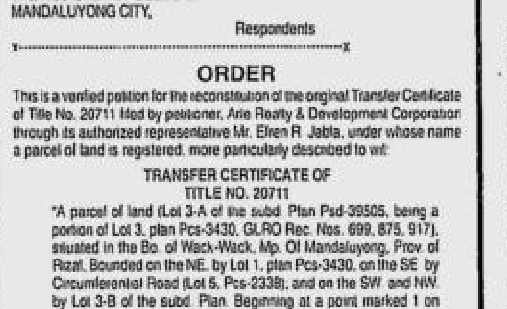

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"I will never erase his name from the Book of Life but will acknowledge his name in the presence of my Father and His angels." - Revelation 3:15

In loving memory
on the first death anniversary of the late

ANTONIO M. EJERCITO

who peacefully passed away on December 11, 2005
Holy Masses will be offered on Monday, December 11, 2006
at the following churches:

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH Pinaglabanan St., San Juan	6:30am 7:15am
SANTUARIO DE STO. CRISTO F. Blumentritt, San Juan M.M.	7:00am 6:00pm
MARY THE QUEEN PARISH Greenhills, San Juan	6:00am 7:00am
HOLY FAMILY CHAPEL Greenhills Shopping Center, San Juan	12:00nn
SANTUARIO DE SAN JOSE PARISH Greenhills, Mandaluyong City	6:15am
ST. FRANCIS CHURCH Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City	6:00pm
SANTA ROSA DE LIMA PARISH Pasig City	6:00pm
STA. MARIA DELLA STRADA PARISH Katipunan Road, cor. Pansol St., Quezon City	6:00am
SACRED HEART PARISH Kamuning, Quezon City	6:00am
SHRINE OF MARY, QUEEN OF PEACE (OUR LADY OF EDSA) Edsa cor. Ortigas Avenue, Quezon City	6:00am
MOUNT CARMEL SHRINE Doña Juana Rodriguez Ave., Quezon City	6:00am 7:00am 6:00pm
CARMEL OF ST. THERESE Gilmore Ave., Quezon City	6:30am
NATIONAL SHRINE OF THE MOST HOLY ROSARY Santo Domingo Church, Quezon City	7:15am 6:00pm
MOST HOLY REDEEMER PARISH Quezon City	6:30am 6:00pm
ST. JOSEPH CONVENT OF PERPETUAL ADORATION Quezon City	6:00am
PARISH OF THE LORD OF DIVINE MERCY Sikatuna Village, Quezon City	6:00pm
SACRED HEART PARISH Kamuning, Quezon City	6:00pm
CHRIST THE KING E. Rodriguez Ave., Quezon City	6:30am
CHRIST THE KING Green Meadows Ave., Quezon City	6:00pm
SANTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO PARISH Forbes Park, Makati	7:30am
ST. JOHN BOSCO PARISH Arnaiz St., Makati City	12:00nn
STO. NIÑO DELA PAZ CHAPEL Greenbelt Chapel, Ayala Center, Makati City	5:45am
ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER PARISH Palanan, Makati City	6:00pm
ST. ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGUORI PARISH Magallanes Village, Makati City	6:00pm
SAN ILDEFONSO PARISH Pio del Pilar, Makati City	6:00pm
SACRED HEART OF JESUS CHAPLAINCY Hillsborough Village, Muntinlupa City	6:00am
ST. JAMES THE GREAT PARISH Ayala, Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City	6:00pm
OUR LADY OF THE MOST HOLY ROSARY PARISH Plaza Lorenzo Ruiz, Binondo Manila	7:30am
STA. CRUZ PARISH Sta. Cruz, Manila	8:00am
ST. ANTHONY'S SHRINE Sampaloc, Manila	6:30pm
ARCHDIOCESAN SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF LORETO Sampaloc, Manila	8:00am
ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA PARISH Singalong, Manila	7:00am
NATIONAL SHRINE OF ST. MICHAEL and the ARCHANGELS San Miguel, Manila	6:00pm
ST. JUDE CATHOLIC PARISH J.P. Laurel, Manila	6:30am 6:00pm
SANTO NIÑO PARISH Pandacan, Manila	6:30am
OUR LADY OF BEAUTIFUL LOVE PARISH Merville Park, Parañaque	6:00pm
SAN ISIDRO PARISH Pulilan, Bulacan	6:00am
OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE PARISH Pagsanjan, Laguna	6:00am 6:00pm
SACRED HEART PARISH Sascho, JAPAN	11:30am

USA Churches

ST. STEPHEN MARTYR CHURCH Washington, D.C., USA	6:30am
EPIPHANY PARISH IN GEORGETOWN Washington, D.C., USA	7:30am
OUR LADY OF VICTORY Washington, D.C., USA	11:30am
ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE: Washington, D.C., USA	8:00am
ST. ALOYSIUS Washington, D.C., USA	7:00am
ST. PETER'S CHURCH Washington, D.C., USA	7:00am
CHURCH OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT Chevy Chase, MD, USA	6:30am
ST. BARTHOLOMEW Bethesda, MD, USA	8:00am
ST. JANE DE CHANTAL Bethesda, MD, USA	8:00am
OUR LADY OF MERCY Potomac, MD, USA	8:30am
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST El Cerrito, CA, USA	8:00am
CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT Fremont, CA, USA	8:00am

Tony's beloved mother, **Maria Marcelo Vda.** de Emilio Ejercito Sr., his sisters and brothers, Pilarica, Emilio, Jr. (Toty) ⊕, Paulino (Paulie), Maria Patrocinio (Pat), Maria Consejo (Connie)⊕, Marita, **President Joseph E. Estrada,** Jorge (George)⊕, Jesus (Jesse), sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, nieces, nephews and other relatives request for your prayers for his eternal peace.

Felix H. Limon

(December 5, 1915 - December 8, 2006)

Felix joined our Creator in the early morning of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. He is survived by his wife **Concepcion**, his children **Emily, Editha, Ed/Boyet**, and **Eddie**, and by his grandchildren **Joji, Peter, Mark, Chesca, Stevie, Patricia, Lorenzo, Mai-Mai, Miguel, Angela, Michael, Terence, Nicole** and **Christian**.

The wake is at the Capilla de San Francisco, Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati until Monday, December 11.

He will be brought to Floresco Funeral Home in Conception, Malabon on Tuesday, December 12. Interment will be on Wednesday, December 13, after the 4 p.m. Mass at the Immaculate Conception Church, Malabon.

In God is my salvation and my glory. The rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.
(Ps 62.7)

(In lieu of flowers, instead kindly make donations to the victims of typhoon Reming. Checks can be made payable to Rotary Club of Parañaque South), or to the Finex Research and Dev Foundation Inc.

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People, Events & Products

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Editor Aries Espinosa

First Filipino lawyer elected president of APAA

ALONZO Q. ANCHETA, A LEADING Philippine intellectual property and business law practitioner, was recently elected the 8th president of the Asian Patent Attorneys Association (APAA) at its 14th general assembly held in Kaohsiung, Taiwan Nov. 8. The meeting was attended by over 1200 participants, including about 800 members from 16 Asian countries and some 400 observers from 45 other countries around the world. The Association, with headquarters in Tokyo, Japan, was founded in 1969 and now has a membership of about 2200 trademark and patent attorneys belonging to 16 recognized groups in Asia and Oceania. APAA has observer status as a non-governmental organization in meetings of the World Intellectual Property Organization.

Ancheta is the first Filipino to head the Association. His election to the presidency is the culmination of over 30 years of active involvement in the Association's affairs as committee co-chair, several times as Council member and vice president, and two terms as senior vice president. Ancheta is a co-founding partner of the Quasha Ancheta Peña & Nolasco Law Offices and manages its associated boutique IP and business law firm Zobella & Co. (AQ Ancheta & Partners). International IP affiliations of Ancheta include AIPPI, Lesi, ACG and Inta.

Elected with Ancheta for a three-year term are Kenji Yoshida (Japan), Greg Munt (Australia), CK Kwong (Hong Kong), senior vice presidents and Sadafumi Kobori (Japan), secretary-general. Officers of the Association are chosen from among the 91-man governing Council. Filipino Council members, besides Ancheta, are IP lawyers Lorna Patajo-Kapunan, Aleli Angela G. Quirino and Bienvenido I. Somera Jr.

ANTA INTRODUCED IN THE PHILIPPINES

Anta, a major brand of sports and leisure shoes available in Europe and the Middle East, was formally introduced recently before members of media and dealers at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel. Shown, from left, are Vincent L. Tanjutco, president of Creative Concepts Inc, Mylene de Jesus, advertising sales officer of the Inquirer, Pepito Olarte Inquirer VP for advertising, James Tanhuy, chair of JPT General Merchandising Inc, exclusive distributor of Anta brand in the Philippines, Kerry Zhou, director of Anta China, and Samuel Xu, marketing director of Anta China.

GlobeSolutions provides ePerformax with MessageConnect

GLOBESOLUTIONS, THE CORPORATE wireless business group of Globe Telecom and Innove Communications, will be providing ePerformax Contact Centers, an award-winning call center based in the Philippines and the United States, with its MessageConnect service.

MessageConnect allows enterprises to send or broadcast information to all their employees and clients via SMS and MMS so they get up-to-date and reliable data. It sends messages in bulk, thus providing corporations a central messaging platform for all their communication needs.

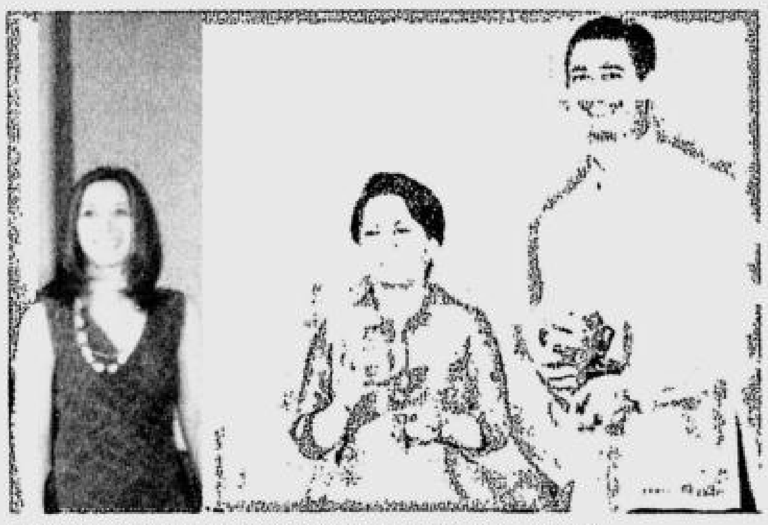
This service provides fast and direct reach to the company's people and to its customers, with messages sent in real time or on a set schedule. It saves the company staff time by decreasing phone queries and it even enables polls, mini-campaigns and various business processes.

With this service, ePerformax will be able to provide value-added messaging services to its growing workforce in Metro Manila. The company will use this to conduct instant surveys and track attendance.

Also, ePerformax will utilize this service in all of its company and recruitment events starting with the 2006 "X Factor Idols" Christmas party where an individual signing competition will be held to showcase the talents of its employees and the winner will be determined by the number of text votes received.

MessageConnect can be a tool for recruitment to update applicants on their interview and exam schedules as well as their status. This service can also be used for company updates such as emergency and training announcements, job opportunities and calendar of events. Information on human resources like payroll and promotion announcements, and launches and approval of benefits can also be sent to employees through this service.

Sealing the partnership are (from left) GlobeSolutions OIC-team leader Jenny Santillan, GlobeSolutions marketing head Harvey Libarnes, ePerformax general manager Ronald Arambulo and ePerformax financial planning director Donna Ibeas.



GMA AT BUSINESS LEADERSHIP AWARDS

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo confers the Aurelio Periquet Jr Business Leadership Pearl Award to Illac Diaz, president of My Home Shelter Foundation. Looking on is Anna Marie Periquet, president of the APJ Foundation.

Almost 4M Filipinos at risk of PAD

ACCORDING TO THE 2004 NAtional Nutrition and Health Survey, there are almost 4 million Filipinos who are suffering from diabetes. These people are constantly in danger of succumbing to the disease's complications such as Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD).

PAD, which primary risk factor is diabetes, is a problem with blood flow in the arteries. The disease causes the arteries that normally supplies blood to the muscle to get narrow or blocked so that less blood can flow through the artery. Patients with PAD face a six to sevenfold increased risk of heart attack and stroke.

PAD is considered to be a silent epidemic because its symptoms are often mistaken to be a sign of arthritis or some other medical illness. Moreover, most patients who are affected by the disease do not feel any symptoms or are asymptomatic.

To help combat this silent disease, Otsuka Pharmaceuticals launches the Improve Peripheral Arterial Disease Awareness Club (i-PAD), a project which aims to aid doctors diagnose PAD among diabetic patients. It also aims to disseminate information about PAD among people who are at risk of the disease.

Under the i-PAD is the Bantay Paa project. Bantay Paa's primary goal is to determine the prevalence of PAD among diabetic patients through ABI (ankle brachial index) screening and monofilament testing. ABL screening is a patient-friendly, inexpensive technique that compares blood pressures between the patient's arms and ankles. The ABI test is a useful tool, as it not only provides clinicians with a means of identification of PAD, but also with information regarding the severity of PAD that can assist in guiding a treatment approach.

Once diagnosed, patients will be given Pletaal (cilostazol) samples, an antiplatelet drug which is also used to treat PAD. Studies have shown that diabetic and non-diabetic patients with PAD respond favorably to cilostazol. Patients are also given free patient footcare guide and other relevant materials.

PAD may be a silent disease but patients need not suffer in silence. Through the i-PAD awareness campaign, doctors will have a partner in diagnosing the disease. Once properly diagnosed, patients can be armed with the proper treatment to avoid suffering from more serious complications.

For more inquiries about PAD and the i-PAD Awareness campaign, you may call the PAD Connect Hotline at 811-i-PAD for Metro Manila (811-4-723) or 1-800-811-i-PAD for provincial area (1-800-4-723).

PETRON IS FUEL PARTNER OF CAR OF THE YEAR 2006

Inspired by the success of the two preceding Car of the Year Philippines (Coty) events, Petron Corp has signed up as the official fuel partner of Coty 2006. Petron advertising and sales promotion manager Charmaine Canillas (4th from left) shakes hands with Car Awards Group Inc (Cagi) president Aida Sevilla Mendoza on the deal accompanied by Cagi testing committee vice chair Jason Ang, membership committee chair Dino Directo, founding president Armin Amio and vice president Alvin Uy.

OSPFI recognizes Nesvita Pro-Bone

NESVITA PRO-BONE WAS RECENTLY RECognized by the Osteoporosis Society of the Philippines Foundation Inc. (OSPFI) for its contribution in increasing the Filipinos' awareness on osteoporosis.

Gerard Poa, consumer marketing manager for Nesvita Pro-Heart and Pro-Bone Protection, says, 'OSPFI and Nesvita Pro-Bone Protection share the same goal of educating Filipino adults on bone health. By doing this, we aspire to help them elevate their quality of life.'

To further promote awareness on bone health, Nesvita launched the Nesvita Wellness Tour which deploys nutritionists in office buildings, supermarkets, and groceries nationwide to provide general health advice to the people.

Shown during OSPFI's 8th Annual Scientific Meeting's awards rites is Poa (left) with OSPFI president Dr. Florante P. Gonzaga.

VILLARAZA & ANGANGCO SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

Lawyer Raoul Angangco (3rd from left), co-managing partner of Villaraza & Angangco Law Offices, congratulates the first recipients of the Villaraza & Angangco scholarship award UP law students Ryan Balisacan and Francesca Baltazar (4th and 5th from left). The scholarship is awarded to law students with outstanding academic record, leadership skills and a commitment to public service. Also shown are, from left, lawyers Patricia Bunye, Elma Leogardo, Susan Villanueva and Bienvenido Somera Jr.

Changes in UK work permits to be discussed

THE ENTIRE IMMIGRATION SYSTEM IN the United Kingdom is currently being overhauled, requiring those intending to go to the United Kingdom to live, work, visit or study to be familiar with these changes.

Thus declared Charles Kelley and Cynthia Barker, author of the best-selling book "How to Come to the UK".

The London-based experts on UK immigration laws and regulations will conduct a seminar on how to go to the United Kingdom from Dec. 11 to 15 at the Oxford Suites, located at the corner of Durban and P. Burgos Streets in Makati City.

Kelley and Barker said that UK Home Secretary John Reid has brought in a raft of immigration since he replaced Charles Clarke earlier this year. "The entire immigration system is currently being overhauled as part of the government's five-year strategy, which includes the introduction of a new Points-Based Scheme," they said.

"On Monday, Nov. 13, it was revealed that the Work Permit Application forms will be changing again effective Nov. 27. Existing forms will be accepted up until Dec. 22," said Kelly and Baker. "Thus persons intending to come to the UK must be familiar as to how these forms should be filled up."

The seminar will focus on how to obtain a work permit, dos and don'ts of the work permit process, how the system works, the different types of work permits, how to find an employer and how to access websites leading to 1 million jobs.

The seminar will also provide information on the culture in the United Kingdom and how immigrants are expected to act and accommodate themselves to the UK culture and ways of living.

To register for the seminar, interested parties may call Aissa, Alma and Vince at 831-0496 and 0926-6802022/0920-8418337/and 0922-7527265.

2006 AVA SIGNS TELECAST AGREEMENT

The 2006 Araw Values Advertising (AVA) Awards organizing committee recently signed a formal agreement with ABS-CBN, appointing the latter as the official TV network of the industry's biennial AVA Awards for 2006 and its marketing arm for the Dec. 11 Awards Night and January 2007 telecast special. ABS-CBN shall also take care of the creative, production and staging of the Dec. 11 Araw Values Advertising Awarding ceremonies at the Carlos P. Romulo auditorium of the RCBC Plaza at Makati. The memo of agreement signing was held at The Chronicle Lounge of the ABS-CBN Broadcasting Center. Signing the partnership agreement are (from left) Antonio R. Samson, 2006 AVA co-chair, Raul S. Alvarez, 2006 AVA lead chair, Johnip G. Cua, chair of the Advertising Foundation, Eugenio Lopez III, chair and CEO of ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp, Charo Santos Concio, executive vice president of ABS-CBN, and Jose August Benitez, senior vice president of ABS-CBN for customer relations. Witnessing the signing are (standing, from left) Edgar M. Navalta, treasurer of the AdBoard and Ad Foundation and 2006 AVA finance committee chair, Linda C. Gamboa, assistant board secretary and executive director of Ad Foundation and 2006 AVA project manager, Ma. Teresa D. Villanueva, AdBoard chair, and Alden Castaneda, vice president of ABS-CBN for business development.

Astring-O-sol Specialist supports PSO-HNS Convention

ASTRING-O-SOL SPECIALIST RECENTLY lent its full support to the Philippine Society of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery (PSO-HNS)'s 50th Anniversary Celebration. In its annual convention held from Nov. 29 to Dec. 2 at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel, world-class otolaryngologists, surgeons and ENT (Ear, Nose, Throat) doctors from all over the country gathered together in an opportunity for further learning and exchange of ideas in their respective fields.

Dr. Natividad Almazan-Aguilar, president of the PSO-HNS, shared that most of the participating doctors specialize in such illnesses as sore throats, which are expected to be prevalent, with the onset of the cool Christmas season.

According to Dr. Almazan-Aguilar, a sore throat is not something to be taken lightly. Sore throat can be caused by viruses or bacteria that infect the throat; or it can be caused by allergies, pollution, or even cold, dry air. A sore throat can be due to streptococcus infection. Sometimes, it can be the first sign of another illness, like flu, cold or cough. A sore throat usually heals in about one week, but some complications which may arise include the development of a secondary infection in the middle ear or sinuses. In very rare cases, a throat abscess could occur, or other diseases like rheumatic fever or kidney disease.

Dr. Almazan-Aguilar recommended devoting extra care for our throats so as not to let the intermittent weather get in the way of celebrating the season. "To soothe the irritation and promote faster healing, gargle with an antiseptic mouthwash that will relieve the inflammation while it kills the bacteria which cause sore throat," she suggested. "As much as possible, choose an oral antiseptic that works fast and works up to 24 hours, so that you'll have longer protection and you will not be bothered while doing chores at home or at work."

She also discussed the importance of Chlorhexidine, the gold standard in oral hygiene, which is found to have superior antibacterial and antifungal action in sore throat, mucositis, and halitosis (or bad breath). "Chlorhexidine oral mouthwash, based on research, was found to be superior versus other oral antiseptics," she muses. "It is safe and well-tolerated even for daily use."

Astring-O-sol Specialist contains 0.06 percent Chlorhexidine. It targets, kills sore throat causing germs, and shields the throat for up to 24 hours. It is the superior therapeutic solution trusted by experts and voice professionals.

The PSO-HNS is a nationally recognized association of certified specialists of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, engaging in the relentless pursuit of excellence of service, training, research and public information to all people in the Philippines with professionalism, dignity, compassion and honesty to promote camaraderie among its members.

Astring-O-sol Specialist is a quality product of GlaxoSmithKline, a leading global research-based pharmaceutical company.

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NUTRITION

GOVERNOR ENVERGA RECEIVES CROWN AWARD

Governor Wilfrido Enverga of Quezon Province (2nd from right) together with Provincial Administrator Evelyn Abeja (far right) received the Crown (Consistent Regional Awarding Outstanding Winner in Nutrition) trophy from President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo assisted by Maria Bernardita Flores, OIC Executive Director - National Nutrition Council and DOH Undersecretary Dr. Ethelyn Nieto.

PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF MERIT CONFERRED TO AMABLE AGUILUZ V

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo conferred to Ambassador Amable Aguiluz V, Special Envoy to the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Presidential Medal of Merit award, the highest honor given to a civilian who has gained honor and prestige for the country through international recognition in the fields of literature, arts, entertainment, sciences and other civilian fields of endeavor. Aguiluz was cited by the President for his accomplishments in international relations and diplomacy. Photo shows the President with Ambassador Aguiluz and his wife CieloAguiluz, during the awarding ceremonies held in Malacanang.

TV DEALS INK WITH INFOCOM TECHNOLOGIES' CUBE ITV

TV Deals International Inc, has recently inked an agreement with Infocom Technologies for its TV classified ads program. The first of its kind in the country, TV Deals can be viewed nightly from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. on SkyCable and Home's Channel 25 Cube iTV. Viewers interested to buy and sell properties now have a means to do so and what's more, placements on TV Deals are uploaded on the Internet such as on YouTube for wider reach. Also possible are text messages, should a buyer be interested in any of the products or services being featured. The partnership showcases latest trends in multimedia technology and expertise while aiming to increase brand and consumer awareness. Seated are (from left) Karen Co Kehyeng; Edgardo Bautista, Infocom presidentand CEO; Ariel Salumbides, TV Deals president; standing are (from left) Zarah Dumilon and Sandra Salumbides.

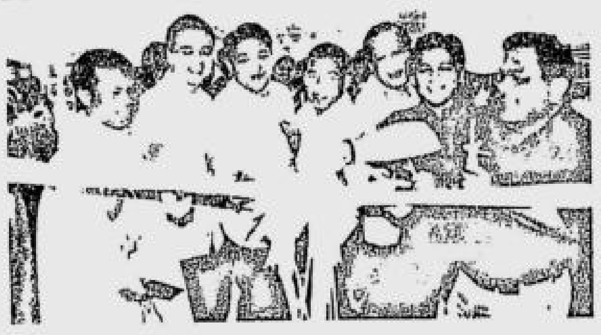
KELLOGGS' TONY THE TIGER WITH COLORING CONTEST FINALISTS

Kellogg's, the worldwide leader in breakfast cereals, recently embarked on a Metro Manila-wide school tour in cooperation with Alaska Fresh Milk to communicate the importance of a healthy breakfast to young children. Through Filipino classic games and other activities like a coloring contest, the inventor of corn flakes delivered the message that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Photo shows Kellogg's Frosties mascot Tony the Tiger gamely posing with the finalists of the coloring contest in Lourdes School Mandaluyong who each received an especially-designed fleece blanket from Kellogg's among other exciting prizes.

PHOTOLINE OPENS AT SM LIPA

Photoline recently opened its new branch at SM Lipa. Photoline's latest branch is located at the 2nd floor beside the food court. Photoline SM Lipa is the 14th Photoline branch inside an SM Supermall. Photoline is also scheduled to open at SM Bicutan this December and at SM Bacolod early next year to serve its growing clientele who want quality services at everyday low prices. With more than 60 branches strategically located from Luzon to Mindanao, the company's well-trained staff are known for giving quality customer service. Photoline services range from digital printing and studio shots to the latest digital cameras and accessories.

NEWSBARBERS OPENS IN SM SUPERCENTER PASIG



Shown (from left): Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr, Rep. Ronaldo 'Way Kurat' Zamora, Rep. Noynoy Aquino and Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor led the ribbon-cutting ceremony during the grand opening and blessing of newsbarbers' newest branch at SM Supercenter Pasig last Oct. 18. Also in photo are Rev. Fr. Richard Salas of Sta. Rosa de Lima Parish and co-owner Terence Grana (far right).

DRIFT! SPEED! GLIDE!

Feel the adrenalin rush of the 2006–2007 Speed-Tech Ultimate Ride Grand Tourisimo II X-Force Racing and GPX Cyber Formula Challenge Car Racing Campaign. The team behind the success of this event (from left) Hero TV sales assistant for Power Bundling Dist. Tonette Eder, Hero TV segment producer Vaniza Pachoco, Hero TV Channel producer Eric Ang Go, Hero TV Channel director Jocelyn Go , Speed-Tech Toys Int'l Corp general manager Ruben Yu, Kids Connex Mktg Corp managing director Johnson Lim, Kids Connex Mktg Corp Mktg director Mary Jane S. Lim and Speed-Tech Toys Int Corp Mktg manager Giselle Glutero. Check out X-Force and GPX Cyber Formula Remote Control/Battery Operated toy car and see a different hybrid of toy car today. Available in all leading department stores. Exclusively distributed by Speed-Tech Toys Int'l Corp.

Aspect Software signs partnership with DTSI

ASPECT SOFTWARE INC, THE WORLD'S largest company solely focused on the contact center, and DTSI, a leading systems integrator and technology solutions and services provider, today announced that they have entered into a strategic partnership to cater to the growing requirements of the Philippines contact centre market. Under the terms of the agreement, DTSI will distribute all Aspect Software products. The agreement enables DTSI to simplify business operations for its customers by offering them Aspect Software contact center solutions including Aspect eWorkforce Management and Aspect EnsemblePro which help enterprises reduce complexity, increase flexibility, achieve business goals and deliver results within cost and time constraints without compromising the quality of their operations or the experience they deliver. Aspect eWorkforce Management, the market-leading workforce management solution according to industry analyst research, enables companies to plan, manage and optimize the performance of multiskilled, multichannel, multisite and outsourced staffing resources accurately and efficiently. Aspect EnsemblePro is a complete contact center solution that unites inbound, outbound and blended multichannel contact (voice, e-mail, the web and fax), while also delivering voice portal capabilities, recording and quality management, and unified reporting and administration.

The Nutrient Team: DOH and Wendy's

IN THE HUMAN BODY, NUTRIENTS work as a team. But, in order for the human body to function normally, the food we eat must provide every essential nutrient necessary for good health, or you will fall prey to disease.

"It's as simple as that," says Department of Health (DOH) National Center for Disease Prevention and Control Degenerative Disease Office City Health Program Officer Frances Prescilla L. Cuevas, RN MAN. The question is how to restore the health of the nation. It's impossible to restore the health of the nation without restoring the health of every man, woman, and child within the nation. How do we do it? It's not as difficult as it may seem.

Last year, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo declared 2005-2015 as "the decade of healthy lifestyle," resulting to a coalition of government and non-government agencies, professional and medical organizations, and affiliated academic groups with DOH known as the Philippine Coalition for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Disease.

According to Cuevas, the DOH has conducted meetings and dialogues with major fast food chains to encourage the inclusion of healthy alternatives to their traditional menu. "This would be a challenge for fast food restaurants," she added. By and large, fast food meals are high in calories, fat, and sodium, and generally deficient in important vitamins and minerals. Nutrients work as a team. Science has labeled the vitamins, minerals, amino acids, trace elements, and other basic life sustaining nutrients. But it isn't labels and names we're after. These are today's labels. "If a single nutrient is missing, then every nutrient on the team malfunctions. That's a fact," explained Cuevas. Many major diseases have been targeted as having a casual relationship to the food we eat.

Cuevas enthused that of its long list of partners, only Wenphil Corporation (Wendy's Hamburgers) has agreed to sign a memorandum of agreement since last year. In so short a time, Wendy's has added sugar-free iced tea and low-fat mayonnaise in their dishes. Wendy's zeroed-in on the promotion of salad menus as main dishes, and more significantly, the promotion of nutritional guidelines to its average consumer.

A pioneer in serving salads to the masses, Wendy's is one place that has got its greens down. Dressings, served separately with a lighter base, comes in several choices like Caesar Lite, Strawberry Lite, Thousand Island Lite, and Ranch Lite. Here's where one can go crazy: The bigger the salad, the better. Wendy's bigger pre-packed fresh salads dubbed "Wendy's Salad Sensations" are rich in antioxidants and vitamins, trumping pale limp lettuce that's mostly just water and fiber. The "Wendy's Salad Sensations" is a well-balanced meal that does not feel like "diet" food so customers will not feel like they are missing out something. Wendy's is likewise the first to successfully introduce Hot-Stuff Baked Potatoes, rich in vitamins and minerals and low in sodium and the fiber and protein rich Chili con Carne.

"Even so, you probably have a pretty good idea of the changes you need to make in your diet and lifestyle in order to achieve good health and then sustain it. I'm convinced that you can enjoy better health - if you have the determination and self-discipline necessary to eat and drink only what is best for you, to do what is best for you," said Cuevas.

Between convenience and nutrition, Wendy's is said to be the better choice one can make in his or her diet and the importance of nutrition has been established beyond doubt.

Fitness First Asia Momentum donates USD10,000 for charity

FITNESS FIRST, THE NUMBER 1 GLOBAL Fitness company, recently held Asia Momentum - a regional annual project where management staff get together for team building, rewards and recognitions, and learn the best practices from each country.

"This year, Malaysia played host to Asia Momentum with the theme 'Giving Back to the Community' where by Fitness First Asia contributed USD10,000, in which competing countries have to earn points for the equivalent cash amount to be donated to the charity of the country's choice", said Mike Lamb, group managing director for Fitness First Asia. Eight countries participated - Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Hong Kong SAR and China, Dubai as well as Philippines - to compete for the pool of fund allocated.

Philippines selected Gawad Kalinga (GK) as the charity for the Philippine team. According to Andrew Phillips, Managing Director for Fitness First Philippines, GK was selected because Fitness First believes that changing the lives of Filipinos through an advocacy of health and fitness is vital for progress, while GK is changing Filipino lives with its vision of establishing communities through its 1 million heroes, "bayanihan" spirit and nation-building.

There were almost 180 participants from all eight countries and to collect the points, each team had to undergo several quizzes and games during the seminar. One of the highlights was the Asia Momentum Ultimate Fun Race held at the KL Tower. Teams had to compete in tasks such as racing up KL Tower (official event sponsor), Treasure Hunt, Telematches, Fitness Challenge and playing traditional Malay musical instruments.

"The Philippine team managed to raise USD1,000 (P50,000) for GK and we are very proud of them," said Tony Meloto, the founder of Gawad Kalinga. "The fund collected will make a difference in another person's life.

The other charity organizations selected were Children's Cancer Foundation from Singapore, Princess PA Foundation from Thailand, Perwira K9 for Malaysia, Yayasan Cinta Anak Bangsa from Indonesia, Standard Chartered Hong Kong Charity Programme For Hong Kong Paralympic Committee and Sports Association for the physically disabled from Hong Kong SAR, and China, with total donations amounting to USD10,000.

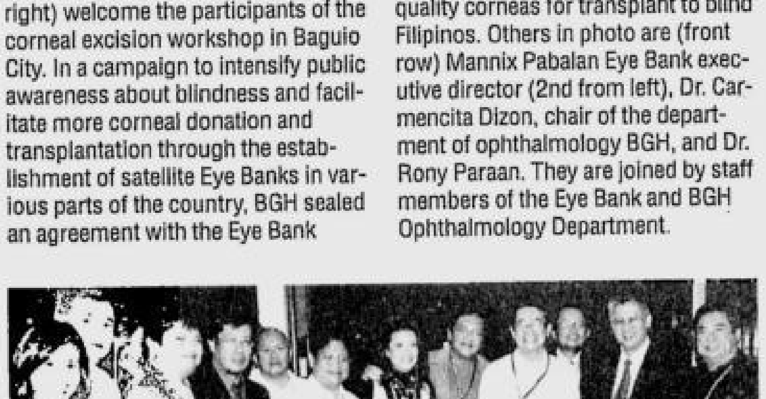
DLSU-GSB RENAMED AFTER PHINMA FOUNDER

De La Salle University has renamed its Graduate School of Business after Phinma founder, Ambassador Ramon V. Del Rosario Sr. The joint resolution by the board of trustees of the De La Salle Professional Schools Inc and the National Mission Council of De La Salle Philippines renaming the Graduate School as 'The De La Salle-Ramon V. del Rosario, Sr. Graduate School of Business' was formally presented to the Phinma founder during Phinma's 50th anniversary gala dinner on Nov. 15.

WELCOME PARTICIPANTS
CORNEAL EXICION WORKSHOP

CORNEAL EXCISION WORKSHOP

Eye Bank president Dr. Minguita Padilla (center) together with Baguio General Hospital (BGH) medical director Dr. Manuel Factora (3rd from right) welcome the participants of the corneal excision workshop in Baguio City. In a campaign to intensify public awareness about blindness and facilitate more corneal donation and transplantation through the establishment of satellite Eye Banks in various parts of the country, BGH sealed an agreement with the Eye Bank Foundation of the Philippines. Eye Bank is a non-government organization committed to sharing the gift of sight by retrieving and distributing quality corneas for transplant to blind Filipinos. Others in photo are (front row) Mannix Pabalan Eye Bank executive director (2nd from left), Dr. Carmencita Dizon, chair of the department of ophthalmology BGH, and Dr. Rony Paraan. They are joined by staff members of the Eye Bank and BGH Ophthalmology Department.



LAA, LAFI LAUNCH VISION 2020

The Letran Alumni Association (LAA) and the Letran Alumni Foundation Inc (Lafi) launched Vision 2020 during a well-attended cocktails recently at the Manila Polo Club. Both organizations presented to an audience of distinguished alumni their common plans and program leading up to the Colegio de San Juan de Letran's 4th centennial anniversary in the year 2020. Shown are officers of the LAA and Lafi with alumnus Rev. Fr. Edmund Nantes, Fr. Provincial, Dominican Province of the Philippines (4th from right) heading the list of distinguished alumni.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

This is to advise that the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has recently approved the merger of Unilever Foods Philippines (UFP) and Unilever Philippines (ULP) with the latter as the surviving entity.

The merger will be effective January 1, 2007.

According to the Plan of Merger, Unilever Philippines as the surviving corporation shall assume all the rights, debts and liabilities of UFP as of the above effectivity date.

Unless advised, there will be no changes in business terms and conditions existing in the manufacture and sale of UFP products. We will continue to operate our manufacturing facilities at the Gateway Business Park in General Trias, Cavite City while the Head Office remains at the Unilever Compound at 1351 United Nations Avenue, Manila.

In this regard, we would like to request that all future communications, billings and payments due to Unilever Foods Philippines from January 1, 2007 be addressed to UNILEVER PHILIPPINES INC.

Thank you very much.

Howard Belton
Chairman and CEO
Unilever Philippines Inc.

Doubt cast on gov't fiscal ability in '07

Developments on fiscal front seen to make or break economy next year

By Michelle V. Remo

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN cautioned against backsliding from efforts to reduce the budget deficit, as its ability to sustain gains in the fiscal front is seen to make or break the economy next year.

Peter Wallace, of the think tank Wallace Business Forum, said there is a high probability of loose spending in 2007 due to the elections.

He said that the implementation of Executive Order No. 558-A, which allows government agencies to engage in lending activities for microenterprises, is an indication that politics has a great influence on government policy-making.

If the government does not closely monitor its expenditures and fails to meet its deficit reduction target for 2007, then it again risks losing the confidence of foreign investors in the Philippines, Wallace warned.

"It is critically important to watch what is happening on the fiscal side, and that spending does not get out of hand," Peter Wallace told reporters Friday.

The government's ability to keep its budget deficit lower than programmed this year has been credited for the declining interest rates which, in turn, creates an environment that encourages investments.

But doubts on the government's ability to sustain next year the gains seen this year have surfaced because of the coming elections, which may push authorities to spend beyond the programmed expenditure to win votes.

According to the economic outlook of Wallace for 2007, the economy, as measured by the gross domestic product (GDP), could slow down to only 5.3 percent in 2007 under a worst-case scenario wherein fiscal discipline is not maintained.

Under the government's fiscal program, the budget deficit should be trimmed down to only P63 billion next year from the projected P105 billion to P115 billion this year. The deficit reduction should be achieved through higher revenue collection and keeping expenditures within budget.

On the other hand, should the government be able to sustain this year's gains and meet its deficit target for next year, then the economy could grow to as high as 6.2 percent.

He said the government's ability to stay on track of its fiscal targets would significantly contribute to confidence of the business sector in the Philippines.

The Philippine economy grew by an average of 5.4 percent in the first three quarters of the year. The National Economic and Development Authority said the full-year economic growth for 2006 could settle at the low-end of the target that ranged between 5.5 and 6.1 percent.

While cautioning against loose spending, Wallace also said election spending, if done within the budget, would help boost the economy next year after its growth has been somewhat restrained due to tightness in expenditure this year.

He said one of the factors that could help prop up the economy next year is a modest recovery in the real estate sector, which is seen to benefit from the rentals of the booming business process outsourcing industry.

Higher bank lending and infrastructure spending is also likely to boost the economy next year, he added.

Congress considers reducing tax perk

CONGRESS IS NOW CONSIDERing simply slashing the income tax holiday (ITH) enjoyed by economic zone locators instead of totally withdrawing the fiscal incentive to appease affected businesses.

Senate President Manual Villar said that, given the resolve of the government's economic managers to remove the ITH, much to the dismay of the business sector, the legislature would look into a compromise.

"We have to rationalize the incentives because we know there are some defects in this scheme, but maybe we could find a compromise," Villar told reporters at the sidelines of the quarterly gathering of the business sector for the Wallace Business Forum held Friday.

The Department of Finance (DOF) has been lobbying for the rationalization of the fiscal incentives granted to businesses to plug huge revenue losses of the government. One of the proposed forms of rationalizing the incentives is the lifting of the ITH, a perk which the DOF believes is a waste of potential revenue.

A study commissioned by the DOF said that the government loses close to P300 billion in potential tax and duty collection every year due to the granting of fiscal incentives, such as tax exemptions.

The DOF wants to reduce this amount by doing away with incentives that are deemed redundant. Incentives are considered redundant if recipient firms are expected to continue investing in the Philippines even without the incentives. The DOF believes the ITH is one of those redundant incentives.

But Peter Wallace, of the think tank Wallace Business Forum, said the ITH is an incentive necessary to keep investors in the Philippines.

He said that, given the poor performance of the Philippines in areas such as infrastructure and cost of doing business, the ITH is a major consideration of some firms for staying in the country.

"In the Philippines, there are a number of areas where it is not competitive in—it has a high cost of electricity, some of the worst infrastructure, relatively high labor prices," Wallace told reporters. "So if you add these all up, the Philippines don't look so good."

He added that the country "has to offer something else as an alternative to offset the disadvantages."

Wallace said the government should not consider tax exemptions as a loss because businesses are encouraged to invest in the country, bringing with them the needed jobs and export revenues.

Wallace said the government could think of doing away with the ITH if it has already achieved competitiveness in the cost of doing business and infrastructure.

Currently, ITH is granted to firms situated in economic zones and those registered with the Board of Investments. *Michelle V. Remo*

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DENR issues new mine permits

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources today will issue three new mining exploration permits, increasing to eight the total number of permits the agency has granted this year.

DENR Secretary Angelo Reyes has approved the mining permit of Buena Suerte Mining Corp., an affiliate of Australian Oxiana Ltd., to explore 4,192 hectares of Liloan, San Francisco and San Ricardo in Southern Leyte for possible copper and gold resources.

Other mining companies expected to receive their permits are Colossal Mining Corp. and 99ers Inc.

The mining companies today are set to make their formal presentations before the DENR, Reyes said.

He said that, during the presentation, the companies must also present their environment programs and social preparations for the community, apart from disclosing their technical and financial resources, before they could be granted mining permits.

In October, the DENR issued exploration permit for MRL Gold Philippines Inc. and its affiliate Egerton Gold Philippines Inc.

Other exploration permit applications are still pending before the DENR.

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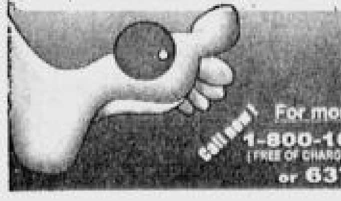


The puzzle of the Filipino laborer

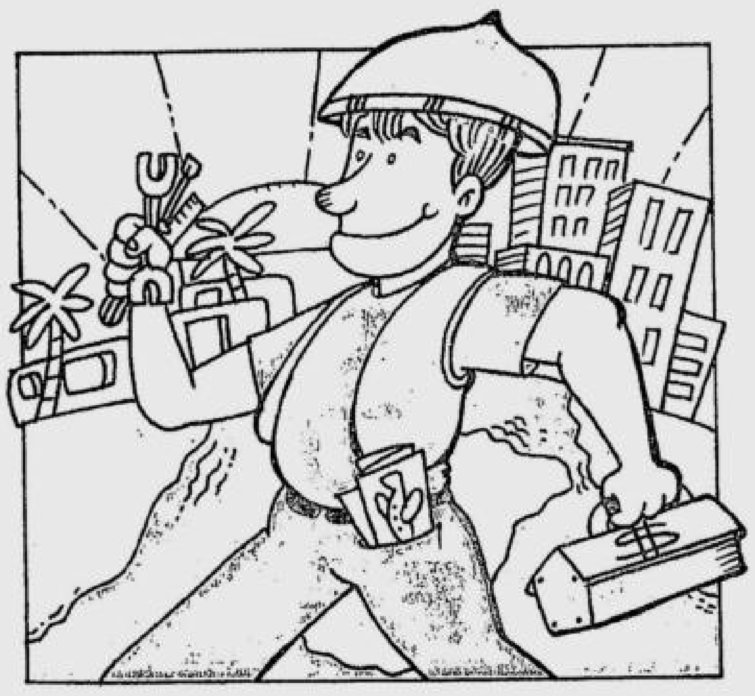
Pinoys most preferred labor force abroad, but productivity in RP low

By Eduardo A. Morato, Jr.
Professor, Asian Institute of Management

EVERY YEAR, THE AIM POLICY Center participates in a World Competitiveness Survey conducted by International Management Development of Switzerland. Every year, the same puzzle appears. Why is it that the Filipino is the number one most preferred labor in the world, according to global respondents, but the same survey says that the productivity of Philippine labor, while they are in the Philippines, ranks 58th, or third to the lowest, among the 60 countries surveyed?

Labor productivity is measured by economists as value added per laborer. This is particularly low for the Philippines due to several factors. First, Philippine industries rely heavily on imported materials, machinery and equipment. This is notably true for the top two exports of the country: Electronics and garments. The value added in these industries is, practically, only the labor component since everything else is imported. Second, the low levels of technology employed by Philippine businesses result in low volumes of production, hence, lower productivity. Third, the Philippines has a very small base of large and medium sized firms. There were only 2,958 large enterprises and 2,923 medium sized enterprises in the country in 2001. Meanwhile, during the same year, there were 61,762 small firms and 743,949 microenterprises. Small and microenterprises have low levels of management sophistication, very rudimentary production systems and generally utilize under-trained laborers who are paid minimum, or lower than minimum, wages. The final outcome of all three factors is low labor productivity.

(Microenterprises have assets below P1.5 million; small have assets of P1.5 to P15 million; medium from P15 million to P60 million and large, P60 million up.)



More educated worker

The Filipino laborer who goes abroad is more educated than the laborer in the Philippines. Some 51 percent of the OFWs are college graduates while only 9 percent of total Philippine labor are college graduates. The OFW who gets hired has, generally, more work experience and is, by inference, more aspirational and ambitious. After all, he or she is willing to leave family and friends in order to get ahead in life. Furthermore, the companies that hire Filipino laborers are infinitely more advanced in terms of technology, management sophistication and operating systems. To the credit of Filipino laborers, they rise up to the challenge. With their more accommodating temperament and higher service orientation, Filipino laborers perform their tasks well, with better attitudes to boot. They seem to learn fast and adapt very well to any culture in the world. This adaptability, coupled with proven resiliency and job commitment, catapults the Filipino laborer to the number one position as the most preferred in the world.

The puzzle of the Filipino laborer is solved. First, Filipino laborers are great workers but the country must invest more in the education and training of the majority of our laborers in order to give them better employability.

Second, the low productivity of the Filipino laborer in the Philippines is largely the fault of our entrepreneurs who use antiquated and uncompetitive technologies. They lack managerial expertise, hardly deploy modern operating systems and underpay their workers relative to the global standards.

Third, Philippine businesses are into low value added industries. Generally, they are concentrated at the low end of the value chain. Fourth, 99 percent of Philippine enterprises are small or microenterprises with rudimentary production or service capabilities. The fault, dear businessmen, lies not in our laborers but in yourselves.

Out-migration trends

The underutilization and undervaluation of the Filipino laborer has resulted in one of the most alarming out-migration trends in the world. The Philippine diaspora is a global phenomenon. In 2005, there were 7,924,188 OFWs. Almost a third of them, or 2,596,508, were in the United States, largely as permanent workers. Almost a million, or 994,671, were in Saudi Arabia, mainly as temporary workers. What is really alarming is the fact that the eight million OFWs represent 20 percent or a full fifth of the total Philippine population aged 21 years old and above.

What is driving the Philippine diaspora is the high level of unemployment in the country, which stood at 10.9 percent in 2004. There was a greater underemployment rate of 16.9 per-

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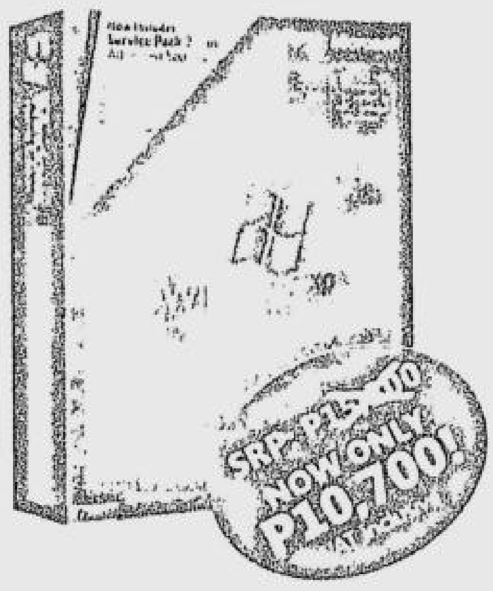

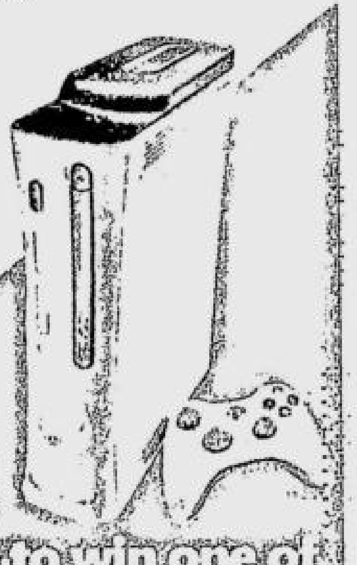

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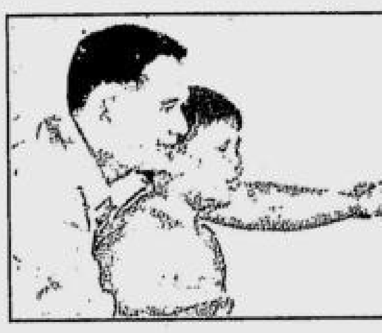

Bridging gap between OFWs, families

Yahoo! takes the lead

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DREAM OF HAVING A BETTER life has compelled millions of Filipinos to leave their comfort zones in the Philippines to work abroad.

While having a noble goal of improving their families' lives, overseas Filipino workers first have to leave their families behind, sometimes causing gaps between parents and children, husbands and wives.

Internet giant Yahoo! aims to bridge that gap and make it easier for OFWs to maintain close contact with their families, despite being thousands of miles apart.

Through the "Pinoy Connect" initiative, Yahoo! and its partners—the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, the Ayala Foundation's Gearing Up Internet Literacy and Access (Project Gilas), the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' Episcopal Commission for Migrants and Itinerant People, Level-up Games, Netopia and Rex Navarrete—will harness the power of the Internet to bring OFWs and their families closer to each other.

"Through Pinoy Connect, Yahoo! can make a difference to Filipinos around the world. The project will ensure that OFWs and their families can connect with each other, as well as encourage our business partners to empower Filipinos to use the Internet," said Yahoo! Singapore and Southeast Asia managing director Reza Behnam.

Citing a recent survey, he said that in the Philippines, 33 percent of respondents said instant messaging—more popularly known as chatting—had improved relationships between parents and children who were living apart.

Also, Filipinos had been named some of the strongest embracers of the Internet and the worldwide Web's most social users, despite the country's having only around 15 million Internet users.

PINOY CONNECT

YAHOO'S! Pinoy Connect logo unveiled during the project launch

"Filipinos are some of the biggest explorers of the worldwide Web. They're most open to the Internet and the most willing to try things online," Behnam said. "But while there's interest, there's an Internet access gap."

Pinoy Connect aims to do just that—bridge that gap and allow more Filipinos, particularly those with OFW loved ones and family members, to harness the power of the Internet to maintain close family ties.

AYALA Foundation EVP Guillermo Luz (left) and Yahoo! SouthEast Asia managing director Reza Behnam

The project is composed of four components: the Pinoy Connect Website, Pinoy Connect in Schools, Pinoy Connect Passport and Pinoy Connect Video Tutorials.

The Website is specially developed for OFW families, with a treasure trove of news and information about the OFW community, as well as from Yahoo!'s Pinoy Connect partners.

Apart from the Website, Yahoo! has also developed an education campaign, which includes posters pertaining to the Internet and how this can be used to stay in touch with family members and loved ones living abroad, as well as materials specially developed for computer teachers who can then impart new knowledge on the Internet to their students.

There is also the Pinoy Connect Passport that users can print out. This contains step-by-step instructions on how to stay connected via the Internet. Available in English and Filipino, this is particularly useful for new Internet users.

Lastly, the Pinoy Connect Video Tutorial, narrated by popular Filipino-American stand-up comic Rex Navarrete, will be shown during OWWA's pre-departure seminars. It provides basic tips on using the Internet, including services such as e-mail, instant messaging and photo sharing.

"We believe the Internet can transform lives and we believe that Yahoo! can make a difference for Filipinos living around the world who need to communicate and stay in touch," Behnam said.

Nokia mobile gaming to reach RP in June

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE PHILIPPINES WILL BECOME PART of the global N-Gage Arena, Nokia's mobile gaming community, by June next year.

"We will have a full consumer launch (in the Philippines) in mid-2007," Nokia's multimedia communications officer Jenny Soininen told the INQUIRER in an e-mail message.

N-Gage Arena will allow consumers to easily find, buy, play and manage rich mobile games on upcoming Nokia N series multimedia computers and other Nokia S60 devices starting next year.

First on the launch plan are the United States, Germany, India, Spain, China and Thailand. These countries, which represent early launch markets for Nokia, were part of a global study on the gaming habits and preferences of users.

"We chose a selection of countries across the globe that are representative of key regions for the early launch phases of Nokia's next generation mobile games," Soininen said.

The survey of 1,800 participants said that globally, mobile users played multiplayer games on their mobile phones at least once a week for an average of 28 minutes (80 percent), play mobile games on the move or during idle time (56 percent), and want to share demos with friends (62 percent).

A majority (79 percent) would test games sent by friends or acquaintances.

Good gameplay (83 percent), replayability (79 percent) and game genre (78 percent) were key motivators when considering which mobile games to buy or subscribe to.

When it comes to getting games, downloading mobile games from the Internet (34 percent) was almost as popular as over-the-air or phone to phone distribution (45 percent). In Thailand, 44 percent preferred over-the-air distribution while 27 percent wanted Internet downloads.

If given the opportunity to test a game before buying it, most (43 percent) would prefer to try two to three games per week as opposed to only one (21 percent). After the trial, 65 percent said they would prefer to pay for a full game outright rather than buy a subscription (27 percent).

Almost two thirds (63 percent) of the respondents preferred the richer experience of Nokia's next generation mobile games offering over existing Java 2D and Java 3D games offerings, particularly following game trials.

Graphical quality (84 percent) and using the phone for other purposes while downloading (78 percent) were found to be the most important features when deciding to play Nokia's next generation mobile games.

The findings present a new strategy for mobile phone companies and telcos, which are counting on increased usage to sustain profitability in the face of market saturation.

"These research results further validate that consumers are looking to the next-generation of mobile gaming to meet their gaming needs," Nokia director for games and multimedia Jaakko Kaidesoja said in a statement.

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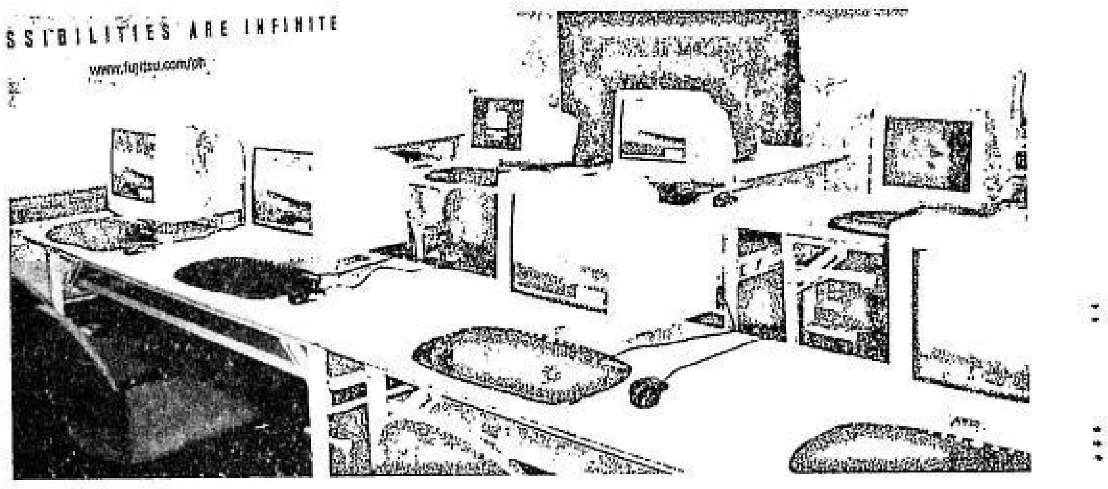
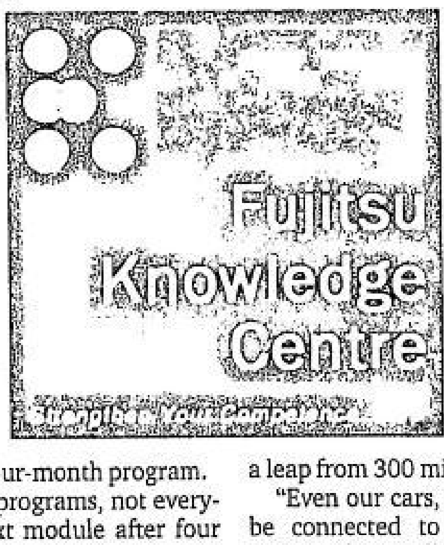


CISCO laboratory

Fujitsu offers training on Cisco technology

By Armin Adina
Inquirer Libre

CITING THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR knowledge in networking technology, Fujitsu Philippines Inc. launched the Fujitsu Knowledge Centre (FKC) to provide training in the latest technology from Cisco Systems Inc., the global leader in networking for the Internet.



Fujitsu Philippines president and CEO Peter Tan said the company put up the FKC to address two specific needs—to have a formal venue for its in-house boot camp training, and to establish a Cisco-certified training center.

"Providing premium-quality technical education has always been one of [Fujitsu's] major capabilities," said Tan.

Fujitsu's boot-camp, Tan added, was a tough four-month program.

"Unlike other training programs, not everyone moves on to the next module after four months," he said.

Fujitsu's boot-camp addresses the internal technological demands of the company, while FKC's open courses offer training in a huge selection of Cisco products for various businesses.

Even fresh college graduates with basic knowledge of networking may enroll in its courses. The lowest rate is around $1,000 for a course that usually costs $2,500 in other countries.

The slashed rate may still be too pricey for some, but Tan explained that "all FKC students will do extensive hands-on training using the latest products from Cisco under the guidance of highly qualified instructors."

FKC is located at the second level of United Life Building in Makati City. A list of courses can be found at www.ph.fujitsu.com/training.

Cisco Systems channels manager Eric Sulit stressed the need for Filipinos to keep up with technology.

He noted during FKC's launch last week at the Fujitsu offices in Makati City a recent Forrester study showing that 14 billion devices would be connected to the Internet by 2010, a leap from 300 million connections in 2001.

"Even our cars, refrigerator, everything will be connected to the Internet," said Sulit, adding "there will be a major evolution on how devices are connecting."

To support the relevance of the FKC here in the country, Sulit quoted a Forbes magazine article saying the Philippines was one of two "surprise markets" for business, along with Indonesia, because of its "English-speaking population, talented workforce and high literacy."

VICTORIA Chan and Chan Kok Bin

Always a step ahead

IT ALL STARTED WITH A LITTLE store in Escolta, the '70s fashion street. A lady with a serious passion for shoes meets a gentleman with a vision of greatness.

Celine president, Victoria Chan, never thought beyond Escolta. This statistics major was content with her one boutique and her hundreds of shoes.

But she was no match for her husband, chair and CEO, Chan Kok Bin who had big dreams for Celine. He saw the potential and the opportunities. More than that, he was willing and able to take the risk.

"Shoes are not really my line. I was originally in sugar trading, but I am a marketing person and I took it all as a challenge. I took the chance to make a name in retail.

"To do that, we made sure we always came out with new styles every two weeks, quality shoes that were both fashionable and affordable. It makes me happy to see the ladies walking out of our stores wearing our shoes. It is our goal to keep them satisfied," states Chan Kok Bin.

It was a growth that came with its own share of bumps and bruises, but riding on the waves of the SM Mall boom, Celine has managed to build a name for itself.

Celine has been awarded by the Philippine Retailers Association as Outstanding Filipino Retailer of the Year in the Medium Fashion Category three times.

Fair and honest dealings with all suppliers and customers, dedication to excellence in store design and window display, uplifting the lives of its employees has earned them the respect of their employees and peers in the industry.

Daughter Mitzi Joy Tan has joined the business as merchandiser for Celine footwear. She shares her parent's business philosophy, "Pay very good attention to the details, because retail is all in the detail. Product differentiation is also a must. The ultimate secret to Celine's success is, 'My father is a man who is always five to ten steps ahead of the ball game, its like chess, you have to anticipate your opponents' next moves. On the other hand, my mother and her love for math and statistics always keeps us realistic and on track."

Husband and wife are still pursuing their passions. And their six children are following in their footsteps. Eldest son, Mark Christian Chan, is penetrating the male footwear market with his own chain of Traffic stores, and he too banks with Metrobank.

Pretzel shop expanding

WHEN IT STARTED HERE IN the Philippines in 1995, Auntie Anne's pretzels were considered as take-home products, mostly patronized by parents.

Today, pretzels are considered a smart reward by the working public. Smart for it is healthier (yet filling) than other snack foods.

This was shown in the market study done by Pretiolas Philippines Inc. (PPI), Auntie Anne's Philippine franchisee.

This finding prompted the firm to enhance its brand image in the Philippines from a conservative baking kitchen to a young dynamic dining experience, with its new tagline Tasteful Rewards.

With 12 in-line stores, PPI is set to open three mall-based retail units and two school-based carts. Auntie Anne's started in an Amish market in Southern Pennsylvania.

Senate Bill No. 2231: Partially Automated Elections in 2007

MAPping the Future

Manuel A. Alcuaz Jr.

SENATE BILL 2231 IS AN INTERESTING creation of the good intentions of two senators with night and day views on Election Automation.

Sen. Dick Gordon is the champion of fully automated election. His vision is to have 1 million Direct Entry Systems (PCs with touch-screens) on which voters in 200,000+ precincts would enter their votes by simply touching the name of their preferred candidate. The Automated Election System would automatically generate the precinct totals (Election Returns), which would be electronically transmitted to district or municipal counting centers for canvassing, and then again electronically transmitted to provincial canvassing centers and eventually to Congress and Comelec for National Canvassing.

Sen. Gordon, like many people, thinks that automation will shorten the election process and eliminate election manipulation and cheating.

Sen. Serge Osmeña, like many senior IT professionals, thinks that even automated systems can be hacked and manipulated.

There is no time to select a vendor, develop a system for nationwide automation, and deploy 1 million Automated Election Systems by May 2007.

So the bill only proposes test automation in six highly urbanized cities and six provinces distributed equally between Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

The bill in its Oct. 10, 2006 revision stated the following minimum capabilities:

A. Utilize or generate official ballots

B. Identify the voter and verify his identity, so that he shall be allowed to vote only once and in only one precinct

C. Prevent any person from using identity of a deceased voter

D. Allow voter to accurately identify and indicate his/her choices with access provisions for differently-enabled

E. Record the voters choices and store in a manner that may not be altered

F. Provide a system of verification to confirm that the machine has registered his choice

G. Count votes, print vote counts and store the result in a manner that may not be altered in any way

H. Transmit the results in a secure and error free manner

I. Recover the votes in case of machine failure

J. Configure access control

K. Provide System Administration Facilities

L. Provide system audit and backtrack

M. Provide system utilities for Data Security

N. Provide for safekeeping, storing and archiving of physical or paper resources

O. Provide voter verified paper trail and an audit system

P. Provide security against unauthorized access

These minimum requirements are good and technology neutral (one of the key objectives in amending RA 8436).

The bill introduces election automation safeguards that exceed those of most states in the United States.

One missing provision is a mandatory manual count audit, using the printed ballots, for one out of each 20 precincts or at least one precinct in a small canvassing center (1,000+ precincts nationwide).

The law provides for an Advisory Council to:

1) Recommend the most appropriate, secure, applicable, and cost effective system

2) Participate as non-voting member of Bidding and Awards Committee

3) And in the Implementation Steering Committee

4) Provide advice and assistance in planning, problem identification, assessment, and resolution, risk management

5) Prepare and submit a written report to the Oversight Committee

There is also a Technical Adhoc Evaluation Committee that shall certify through an international certification entity that the AES, including its hardware and software components, is operating properly, securely and accurately in accordance with the provisions of the act.

The following tests are mandated:

1) Field testing with mock election event

2) Third party audit of AES software

3) Source code review

Interestingly, the bill does not allow Comelec to designate as counting centers any building or facility located within the premises of a camp, reservation, compound, headquarters, detachment, or field office of the military, police, prison or detention bureau, or any law enforcement or investigation agency.

The bill provides for the printing and distribution of 35 printed copies of the election returns to government agencies, political parties, citizens organizations and media.

The bill provides for the electronic transmission of the precinct results to respective levels of board of canvassers. Electronically signed ERs and COCs or those in the storage device shall be used for official canvassing.

The transmission electronically or otherwise is a possible source of manipulation since there is no parallel transmission that is not controlled by Comelec.

The bill also provides for an education campaign to familiarize voters and other stakeholders with the use and operation of the AES.

Since the 2007 elections will only be partially automated, the bill also provides procedures and safeguards for the counting and canvassing of votes in areas that will use manual-voting with paper ballots.

This is where Sen. Serge Osmeña's inputs to minimize fraud become evident.

The first innovation introduced by Senator Osmeña involves taking a digital photo of the election returns and the certificates of canvass and subsequent printing and transmission of these to national and local parties, national and local media, to citizens groups and to the board of canvassers.

The law authorizes recipients of ERs and COCs to do unofficial consolidation and announce the results to the public.

The bill also provides for Comelec to put its digital files on the Website and to keep them there for at least three years.

Another innovation of the bill is the requirement that the canvassing of votes should first be done for national positions. Senator Osmeña had earlier said that canvassing boards would do the local canvass first. When most of the watchers and public had gone home, the canvassing for national positions would then be done. It is at this time that substitution or ERs or COCs could take place.

A final innovation is that in conducting the canvass of ERs or COCs, the board of canvassers at the municipal, city, district, or province shall project each ER or COC on a wall for those present to to follow the canvassing process.

These innovations introduced in SB 2231 will make *dagdag bawas* and other forms of fraud much more difficult to pull off in future elections.

Let us hope the Bicameral Committee adopts the many good provisions of SB 2231.

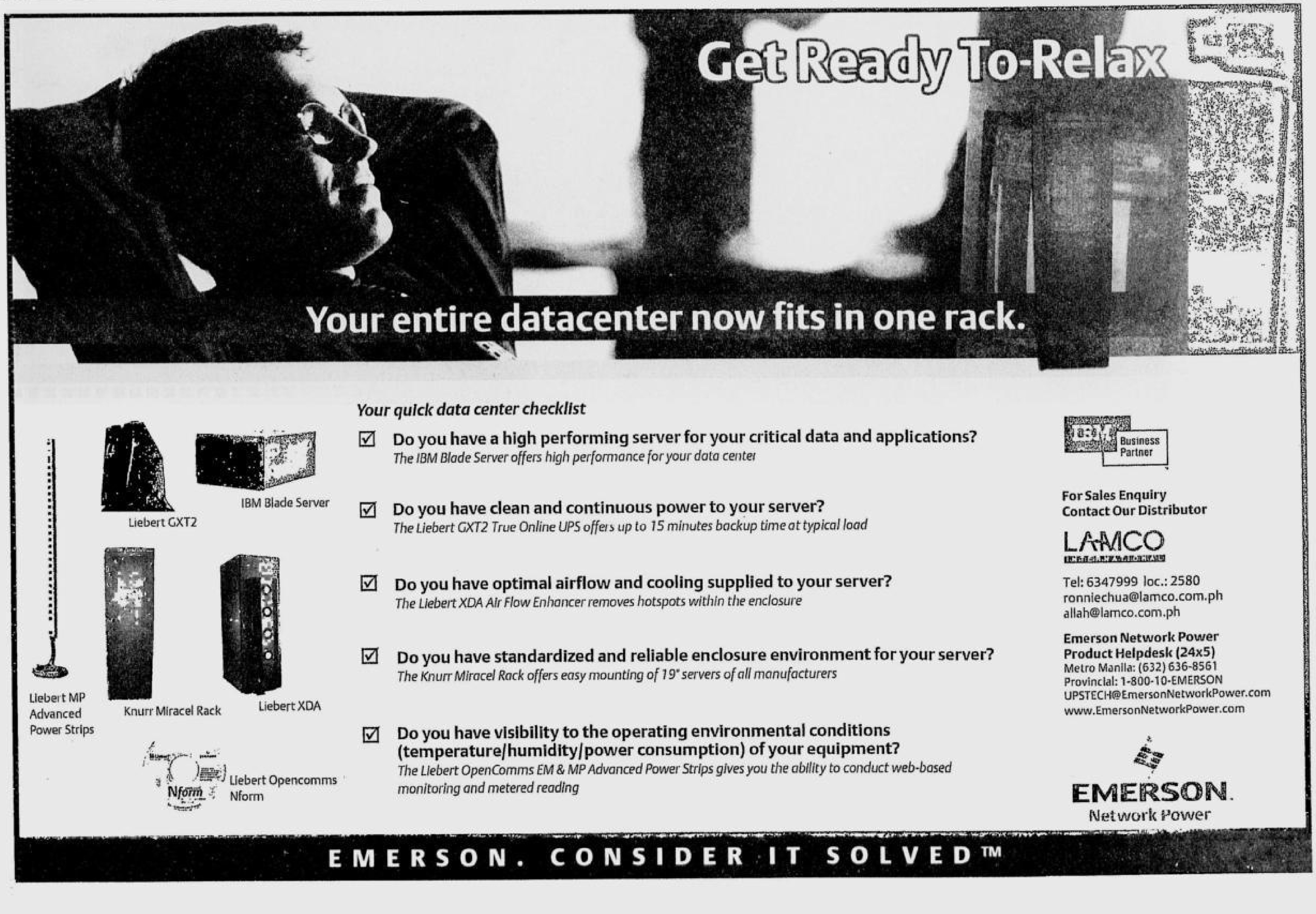
(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is President of Systems Sciences Consult Inc. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

The puzzle of the Filipino laborer

From page B1

cent for the same year. This makes for a total of 27.8 percent unemployed or underemployed. For those who are employed, the cost of living is simply much higher than the minimum wage. For example, the poverty threshold for a family of five in Metro Manila is P16,000 a month versus the minimum wage of P8,000 a month. Unless, the family has two breadwinners, they will remain poor. However, only 52 percent of female workers in the Philippines are economically active. This remains one of the lowest in East and Southeast Asia. Thus, most families have single income earners.

Clearly, the trumpeting of OFWs as modern heroes hides the underlying deficiencies and inefficiencies of the Philippine economy. Sure, the dollar remittances provide the economic band-aid but that's what they are—band-aid. We should not regard our massive diaspora as our good fortune because Filipino laborers are leaving the country because of their misfortunes. They are great workers and regarded as the most internationally competitive laborer in the world. We should, therefore, all beat our breasts with a thousand mea culpas because Filipino laborers only underperform while in the hands of Philippine businessmen. A national soul searching is in order.



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BUSINESS Monday

Balancing the equation

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

AMID CORPORATE SCANDALS AND political indiscretions, our perspective of leadership can easily become jaded. Seeing the flaws of prominent leaders in our country and communities is disheartening. Negative images of corrupt leaders and their abuses of power breed a cynical outlook in our minds toward leadership.

With most media attention tilted toward incidents of leadership failure, upbeat stories of admirable leadership are refreshing, albeit rare. When found, they offer glimmers of optimism and restore our faith in the potential of our leaders.

In October, US News joined forces with Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government to release a list of America's Best Leaders. The list honors the lives and achievements of influential American leaders from a broad spectrum of fields and affords a much-needed glimpse of leadership excellence in our society.

Robert Moses: 2006 Honoree—America's Best Leaders

As a young African-American man growing up in the combustible racial climate of the 1960s, Robert Moses was no stranger to the ills of establishment leadership.

As co-director of the Council of Federated Organizations, an umbrella organization of civil rights groups, Moses came face to face with the injustice and racism perpetuated by the leadership of the state of Mississippi.

His bold work in confronting discriminatory Jim Crow laws played a pivotal role to usher voting reform into the Deep South.

Following his work in the civil rights movement, Moses devoted himself to a new arena in the struggle for equality: Education.

As a volunteer in his daughter's high school, Moses saw firsthand the disadvantaged learning environments in which many minority students are taught.

His experiences motivated him to found The Algebra Project, an educational program created to help students learn skills that are fundamental to successful careers in Math, Technology, or Science.

At its peak, the program has impacted 40,000 youth with its innovative curricula.

Moses currently teaches in Lanier High School in Jackson, Mississippi where he pilots new strategies designed to engage students in their study of Algebra. A passionate believer in the potential of young people, Moses links their educational attainment to the full realization of that potential.

The most urgent social issue affecting poor people and people of color is economic access. In today's world, economic access and full citizenship depend crucially on math and science literacy. I believe that the absence of math literacy in urban and rural communities throughout this country is an issue as urgent as the lack of registered voters in Mississippi was in 1961.

Radical equations

Robert Moses has taken his message and masterfully inspired a shared vision. Prone to listen before speaking, Moses has gained the support of fellow educators and local leaders by tuning into their concerns and allowing them to have direct participation in the Algebra Project.

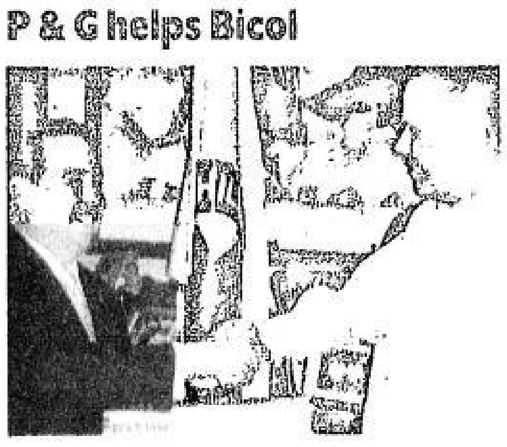
By connecting local communities to his cause, Moses has expanded the breadth and reach of The Algebra Project throughout America.

In an era of leadership cynicism, an authentic and positive influencer like Robert Moses is a breath of fresh air. Passionate, courageous, connected, and persuasive, Moses shines as an example of leadership done right.

GOINGS-ON

UNILAB CEO IS CEO AWARDEE. Carlos C. Ejercito, president and CEO of the country's largest pharmaceutical company United Laboratories Inc. (Unilab), was awarded the Communication Excellence in Organizations (CEO) Award for the Manufacturing Category from the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). Ejercito, at podium, was cited for his communication programs aimed at strengthening relations with Unilab's internal and external stakeholders. With him are IABC board members Ramon Osorio and Butch Raquel.

P & G helps Bicol



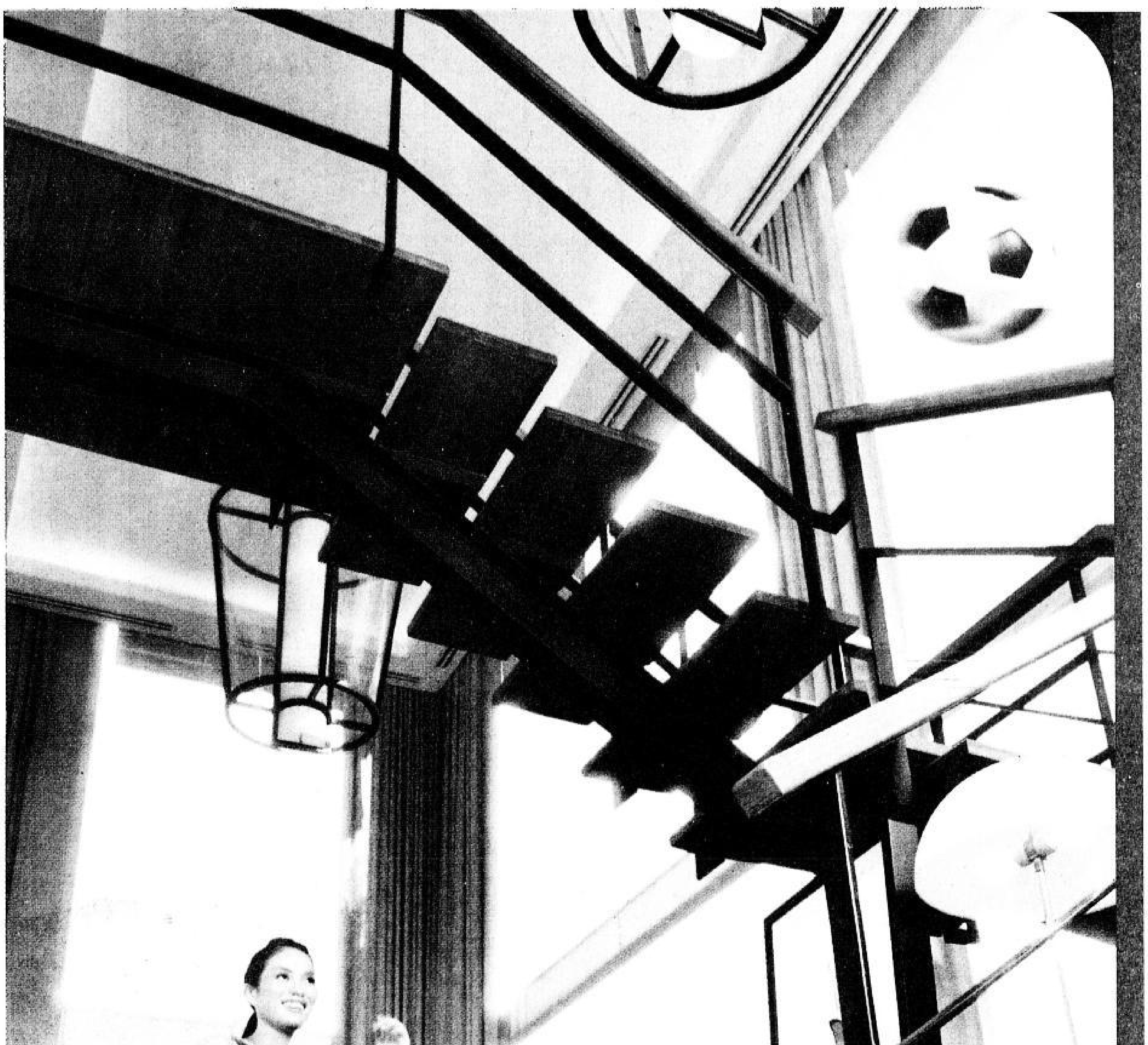
PNRC chair Sen. Richard Gordon with P & G president Jim Lafferty

PROCTER & GAMBLE PHILIPPINES (P&G), makers of Tide, Safeguard and Pampers, recently donated P10 million worth of products and cash to the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) to help support the victims of Supertyphoon "Reming" in Bicol and its neighboring areas.

P&G president Jim Lafferty personally turned over the donation to Sen. Richard Gordon, PNRC chair, last week, saying the victims need all the assistance they can get so they can rise again from the terrible devastation wrought by the supertyphoon.

P&G was among the very first to come to the rescue of the typhoon victims. Lafferty says, "The victims have suffered loss of life, property and livelihood and we need to act fast. We know our products will help families with their basic physical and survival needs. Going beyond that, they have also lost their sense of dignity and we want to see how we can help them restore this and truly recover from this tragedy."

The relief efforts and assistance of P&G is in line with its corporate social responsibility thrust of helping Filipinos "Live, Learn and Thrive (LLT)." LLT is an ongoing P&G program through which the company helps support varied causes, including building homes and schools for Filipino children and initiating programs that promote value-based education.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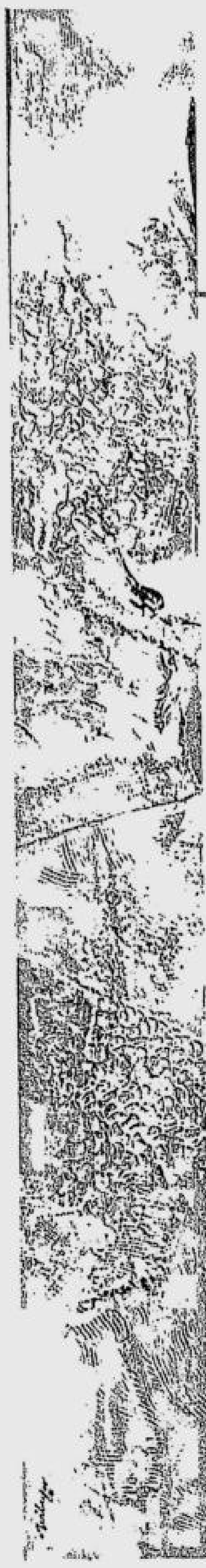
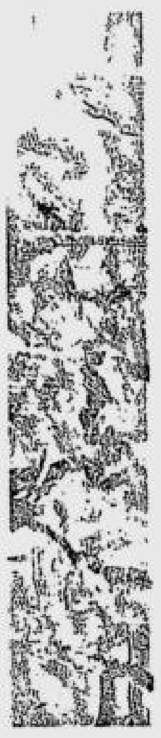


"HOMAGE to Vivaldi: Autumn IV"

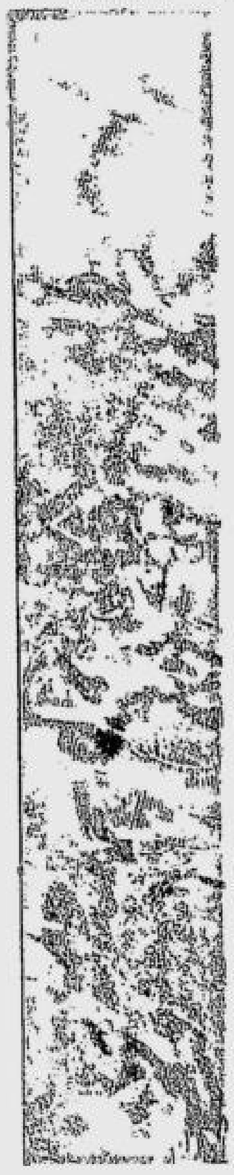
EDWIN WILWAYCO IN THE BIG APPLE

At the top of the heap



"SUMMER XIX"

For his Manhattan show, the abstract expressionist is showing a suite of works inspired by Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons'



"SUMMER XXI"

By Lito B. Zulueta

IF ALL ART ASPIRES to the condition of music, then the visual artist seeks to embody and trace in colors and lines the intrinsic music that is in nature. Such perhaps is the paradox of abstraction. While seeking to eliminate the image and narrative of anything that is figurative, representational, objective and natural, putting everything into a matter of mood and nuance, into the ineffability of shade and echo, the art cannot really escape the world. It paints itself to a corner where it recognizes that space is corporeal, and time is of the essence, felt and actual.

In "Homage to Vivaldi," Edwin Wilwayco continues with a remarkable suite of abstract expressionist works that started with his Paris show last June, "Silent Music." Those works were also based on Antonio Vivaldi's music and in hindsight, a prelude to this show, which will open Dec. 18 at the Philippine Center in Manhattan, New York.

How Wilwayco will fare in the Big Apple seems already prefigured by his successes earlier this year in Essen, Germany, and in Paris. At the least, it could be expected that Wilwayco and New York would play beautiful music together.

The suite are a tribute to Vivaldi's "Four Seasons," the 18th century composer's most famous concerto. Vivaldi's seasons are portrayed in the richest and most intricate of textures. "Winter" is dark and somber, "Summer" is bright and breezy, but conjuring a thunderstorm ominously in the final movement. Wilwayco's painterly gestures equal if not exceed Vivaldi's powerful invocations of the seasons.

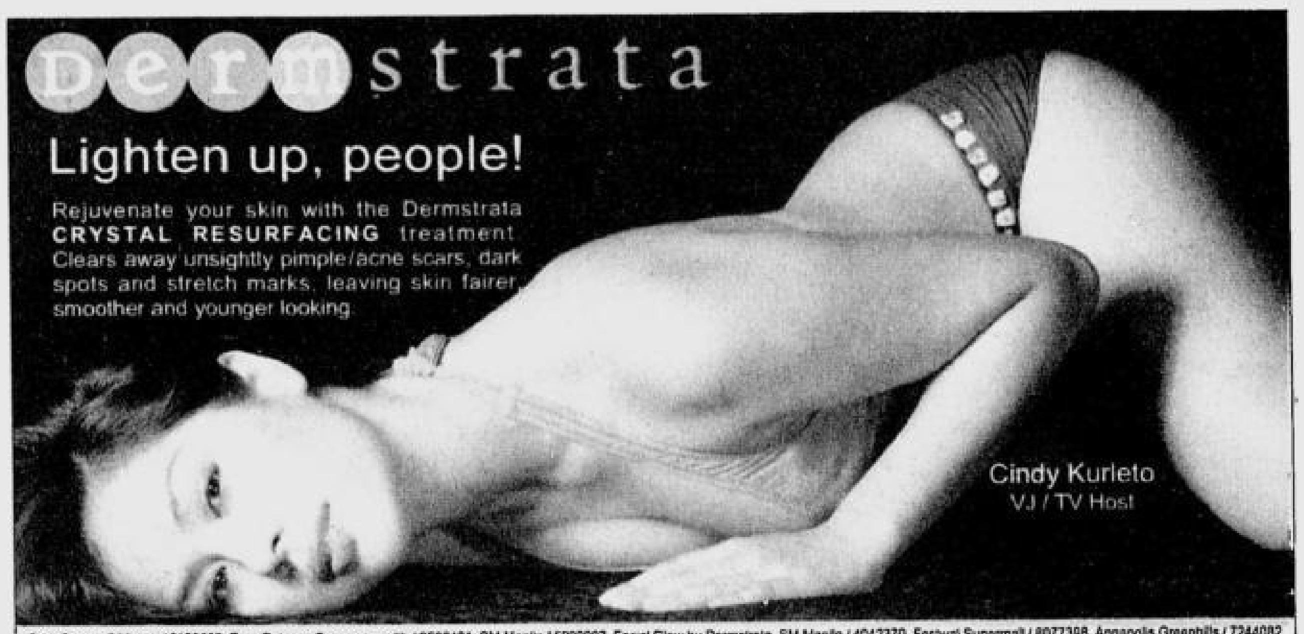
Counterpoint

The New York show will consist of more than 40 narrow and long panels that could be hanged horizontally or vertically. Perhaps when placed on a wall depending on the buyer's predisposition, the panels would look like an awning of winter, spring, summer and autumn, perhaps to complement or to contrast with the actual season. In musical terms, the panels may serve either as consonance or counterpoint.

I think Adele Estrada echoes this in the catalogue: "We are thus led to the crux of Wilwayco's experiment: Counterpoint would be chaos but for the perfect, almost dangerous balance of push and pull." In short, Wilwayco's seems to approximate the conductor's delicate art.

What is good perhaps for the New York-based buyer of the suite of paintings is that the most striking works are those depict-

AT THE TOP/ C4



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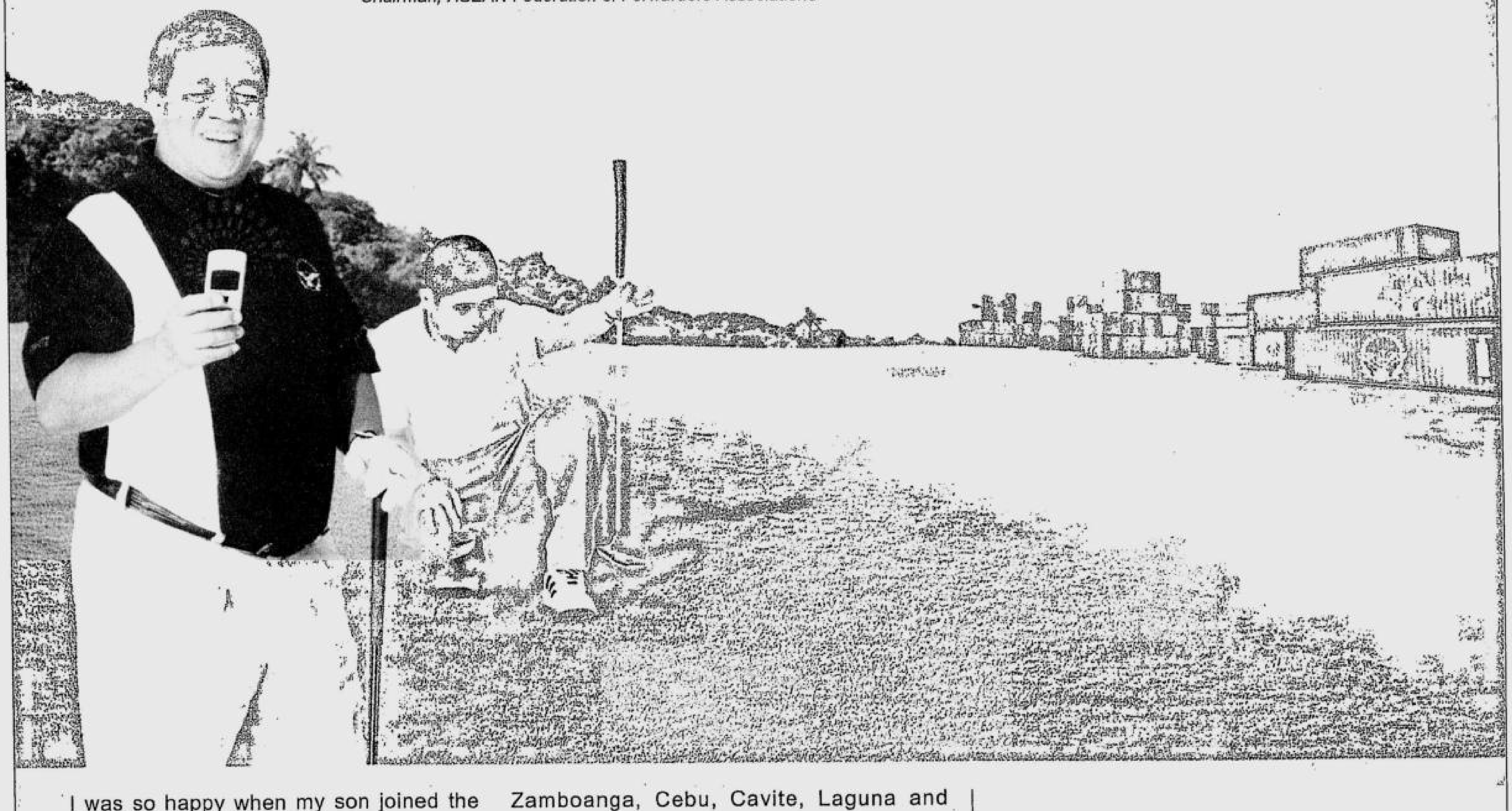
- Lito Colona with son, Mark Colona
President/CEO, Eagle Express Group
Chairman, ASEAN Federation of Forwarders Associations



I was so happy when my son joined the Eagle Express Group. Since then, we've become a 1-2 punch. I use my years of experience in the freight forwarding business and he brings in new ideas. Especially when he switched our communications system over to Sun, which has improved our efficiency. We were so pleased with the service that now our offices in Davao, Zamboanga, Cebu, Cavite, Laguna and Pampanga use a system that connects all our trucks through Sun.

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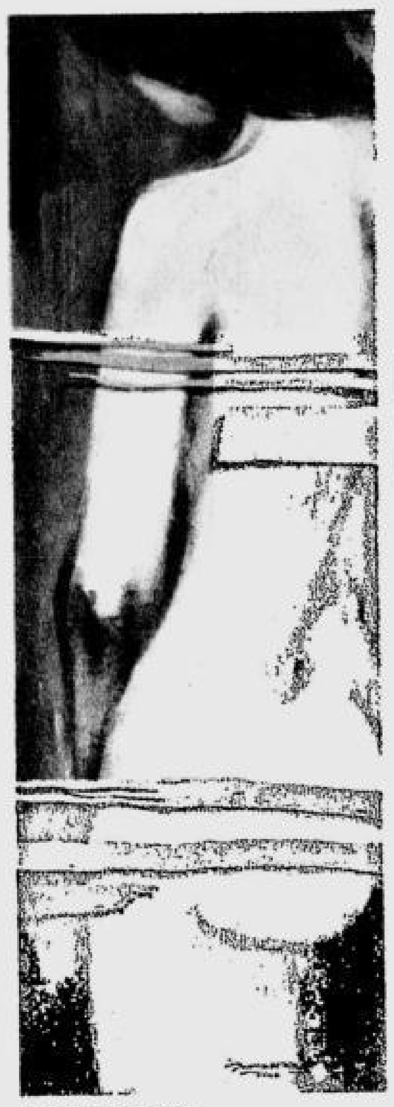
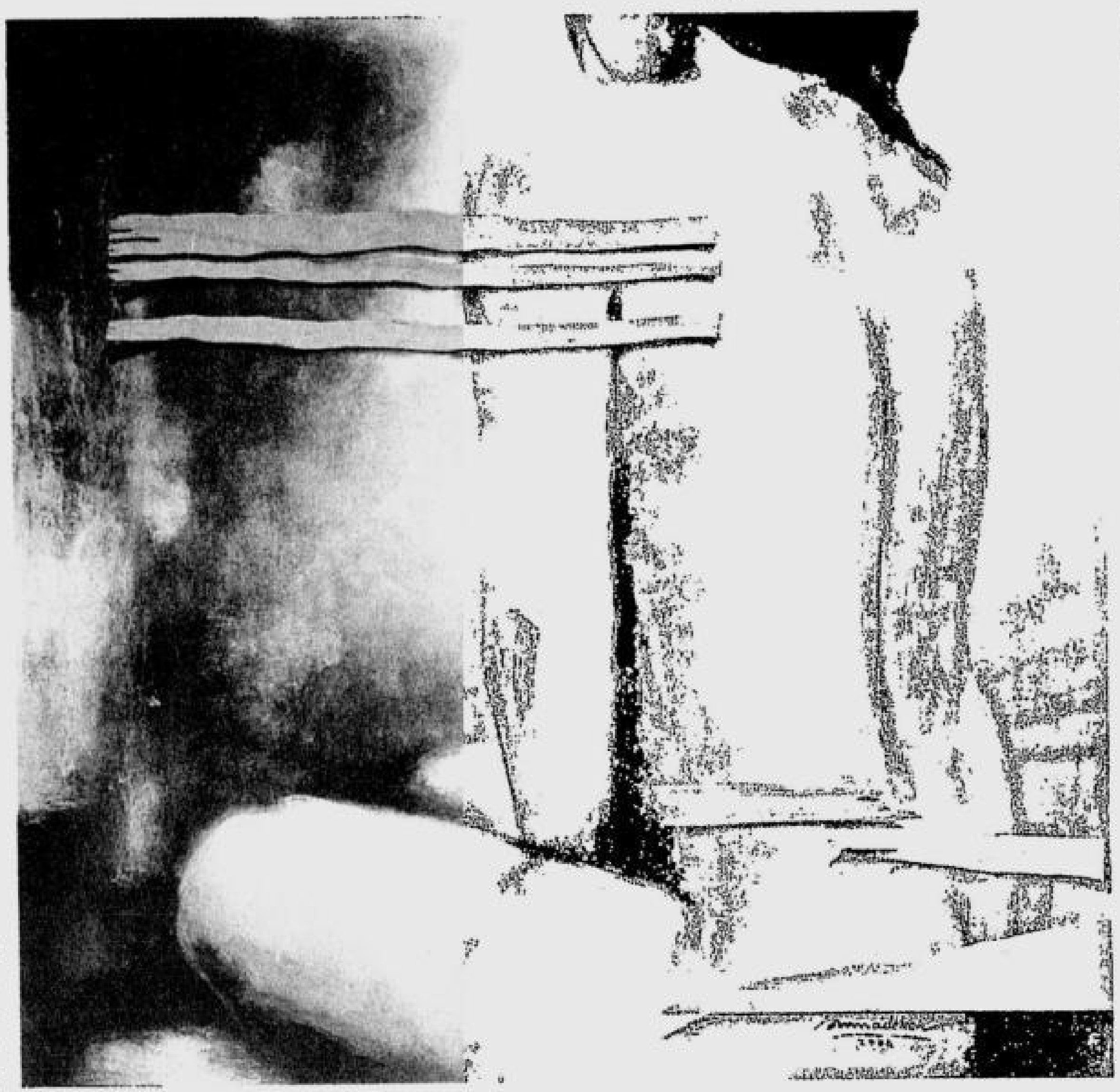
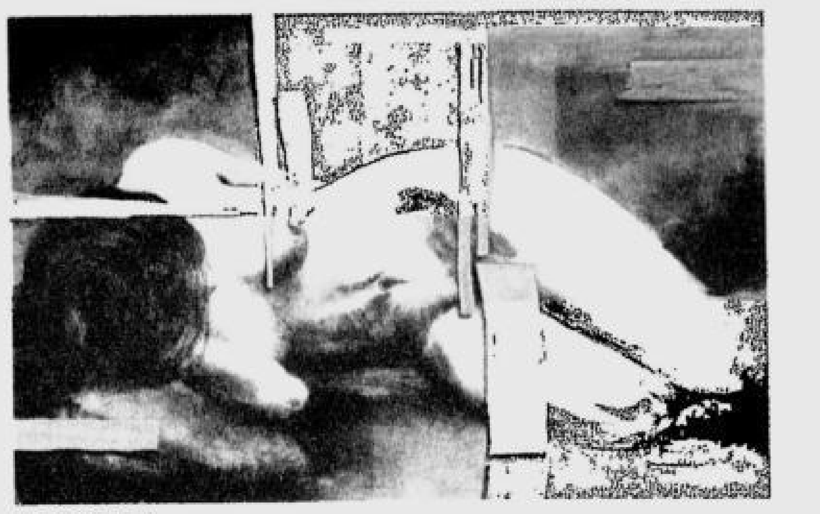
The female nude in the female gaze


"CHERISHED"


"JEALOUSY"


"BELOVED"

By Constantino C. Tejero

THE FEMALE NUDE IN ART has been interpreted through the centuries almost always by male artists as if by natural right. It's just sheer association, actually, like when you say "farmer" it's a man, if "teacher" it's a woman, and if "hairdresser" it sure must be gay—which is not true, of course.

So when a show of female nudes done by a woman opens, there comes a kind of jolt, a shock of recognition, as it were. A first step toward this reeducation should be to spot the difference in such rendering of the female nude from those of resolutely male artists.

Consider Anna de Leon's "Fragments," 15 pieces in mixed media on canvas and paper, until Dec. 17 in Crucible Gallery at the Artwalk, L/4, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City.

In most renditions by male artists, the female nude is presented either brazenly or coyly in a convolution of postures and poses, depending on the artist's natural disposition, spiritual aspiration or sexual preference, his mood, excitability, daring or shamelessness—so that often the female anatomy starts to look like something turned up and down for dissection.

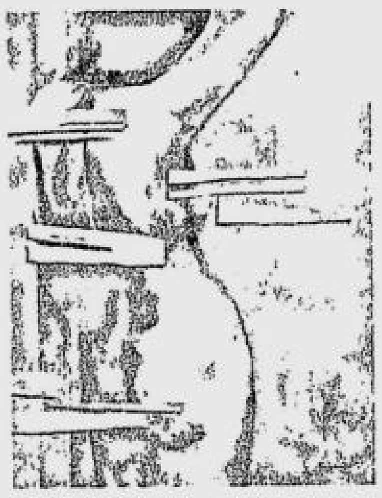
In this show, however, the artist's temperament is just about even. De Leon has rendered her nudes in long languid lines so that the subject (the same woman, as we can see) appears invariably lethargic. Yet there is a variety of moods and emotions here, though none too dramatic but just enough to suggest the state the subject is in.

The pieces are chiefly rendered in earth tones, various shades of brown, gray—a muted colorism that gives the impression of monochrome—and sometimes accented with very bright indigo, bile-green, burnt umber, aquamarine.

"I have always been fascinated with the juxtaposition of flowing lines, patterns and textures," says the artist. "The colors that resonate with me are earthy shades complemented by a stroke of bright color. I like to render my paintings in soft application."

With her face often cropped out of frame or hidden by strands of hair, her body angled to appear in natural pose or repose, the subject becomes anonymous, therefore, Everywoman. This ordinariness is an apt representation for the female psyche and its infinite nuances, tics and modifications.

A slightly calibrated turning of the body from front to side to back, from canvas to canvas, and the titles of the pieces change from "Coquette" to "Cherished" to "Fancy-Free."


"INTIMACY"

A back view of her sitting on the floor against the wall with her head on her knee is transformed into a frontal view on another canvas, and "Passion" becomes "Obsession."

An odalisque is fittingly called "Beloved." A back turned to the viewer is what else but "Jealousy."

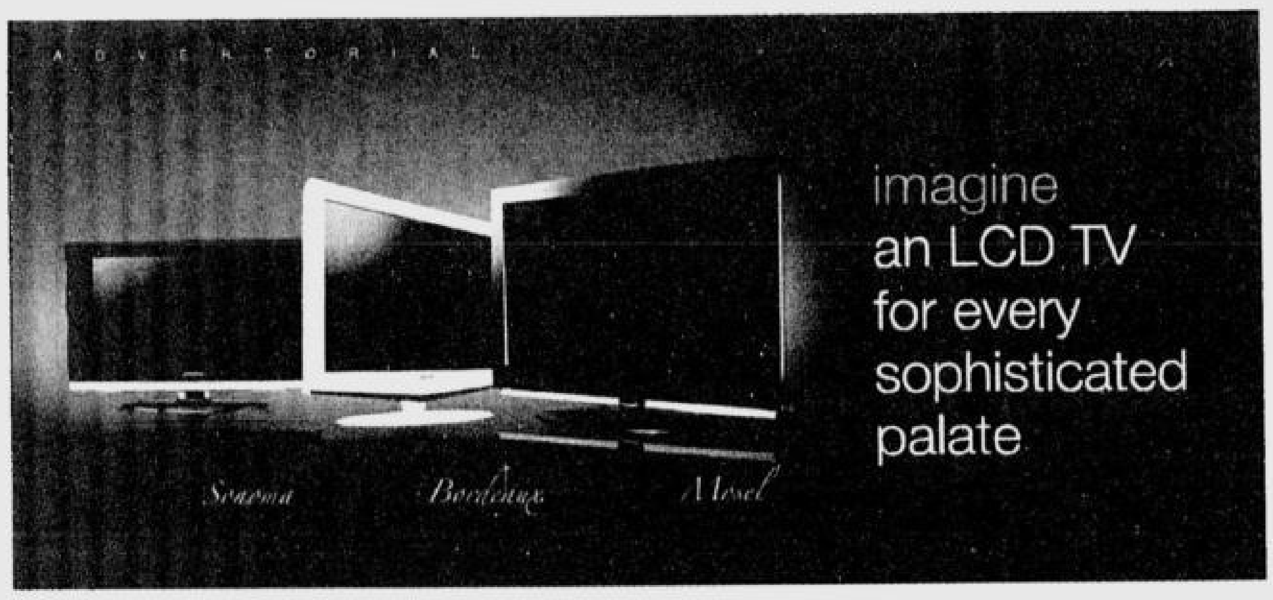
Accentuating each canvas are ochre strips of wood veneer. The wooden fragments obtruding into the image gives the impression the woman is boarded up, her identity being obliterated. This symbolic device the artist explains as "the emotional splinters that traumatize a woman's soul."

In other words, the show is but a jigsaw puzzle and these paintings the fragments that should interlock to compose the enigmatic whole.

This is De Leon's first solo exhibit. An interior designer by profession, she admits she could have gone into full-time art-making earlier had she not been afraid of rendering the human body.

"All these years I felt intimidated by it," she says. "Years of practice and going to endless sessions of life sketching allowed me to overcome my fear of rendering the human form. And so I feel that the female nude is an apt metaphor for my coming out into the art world."

It would seem natural then that if ever someone has to redirect the male gaze it should be a woman. If that's not a natural right, it certainly feels like poetic justice.



"A person's choice of wine reflects his lifestyle, his personality. There are so many cues for us to draw inspiration from."

Mr SJ Park
President & CEO
Samsung South-East Asia & Oceania

IMAGINE THIS. You've had a full day; you're ready to indulge in a moment to yourself. You take your favourite wine glass, fill it with wine. Pour, [illegible] contemplate. You examine the colour, take in the heavenly bouquet and finally, take a sip. Perfection.

Now, would it have been an easy to like Californian wine from Sonoma, an elegant Bordeaux wine from France, a German high-quality Mosel wine in that glass? Your choice reflects your character, your personality. Just as how wine is paired with food to bring out its best qualities, you can meet your ideal match in a Samsung LCD TV. When paired off, it is the perfect complement to your lifestyle. Which wine personality are you?

The fun and free-spirited

You like to bring your friends together. You like to be the life of the party. You are a conversation starter, the one with ideas on what to do, where to go. You glide easily between your social circles, with a glass of Californian wine in your hands. You think of clean lines as an expression of refinement and classiness. You think that technology should be fun and entertaining.

Just as how you enjoy the fun and free-spirited Sonoma wine, you'll find the Sonoma LCD TV to your taste. Simplicity at its most sophisticated, the Sonoma is perfect for house parties. Beneath the seamlessly glossy exterior it's power-packed with excellent Dynamic Contrast and amazing surround sound, and is optimised for gaming at the touch of a button. And with connectivity outlets to camera, camcorder, game player and headphones neatly tucked in at the back, the full digital lifestyle is yours.

The elegant and chic

You carry yourself confidently, having made your mark in the world and proven yourself. Your equivalent of a coffee break is relaxing with a fine glass of French wine at the country club. You shun the noisy pubs for the quiet respite of the wine bar. You are put together impeccably and you believe half of making it to the top is looking good while staying there.

A Samsung Bordeaux LCD TV will fit perfectly in your swanky home interior. Whilst at a wine bar, the Samsung design team was looking at an empty Bordeaux wine glass. The crimson in the glass caught the light at an angle and caught the imagination of the designers.

From every angle, they studied, scrutinised, examined and was inspired. And the result? The beautifully-crafted Samsung Bordeaux LCD TV. It makes a powerful

Some appreciate the free-spirited Californian Sonoma, while some pledge affinity to the elegant French Bordeaux. Perfectionists would not miss the German Mosel. It's a lifestyle statement; these showpieces clearly reflect that.

Yoon Jae Kang
Chief Designer

statement with an elegance that is truly pleasing to the eye. The Bordeaux red at the V-curve hints at the elegance inspired by a wine glass. With a novel swivel stand, it claims its queenly position as the centrepiece of

every living room where it stands. Like a connoisseur appreciative of a Bordeaux wine glass, you'll be mesmerised by the revolutionary design of the Bordeaux. Welcome to your viewing shangri-la.

The discerning and polished

You have tasted success and the best, and you demand nothing less from your everyday living. You would probably have a subscription to Harvard Business Review and Luxury Travel. You are picky only because you really do know what's the best. You appreciate having it 'just right'. And just right means perfection to the T, and more. You would want to know how, when and where the fine wine, the luxury car, and the black caviar came about. You'll only accept the perfection built into the Samsung Mosel LCD TV, no less. Fusing the high luxury design with the pinnacle of display technology, the Mosel is sculpted for the uncompromising you. Imagine the moon casting a shadow on the beautiful sea horizon, giving it a blue hue, that spreads as far as the eye can see. Now imagine a unique and blue LED light illuminating the bottom plate of the Mosel, emitting a special aura. The sparkling clarity of Mosel riesling wine has inspired the design of the crystal-clear bottom plate. A precision engineered beauty, you may just forget that you are watching TV.

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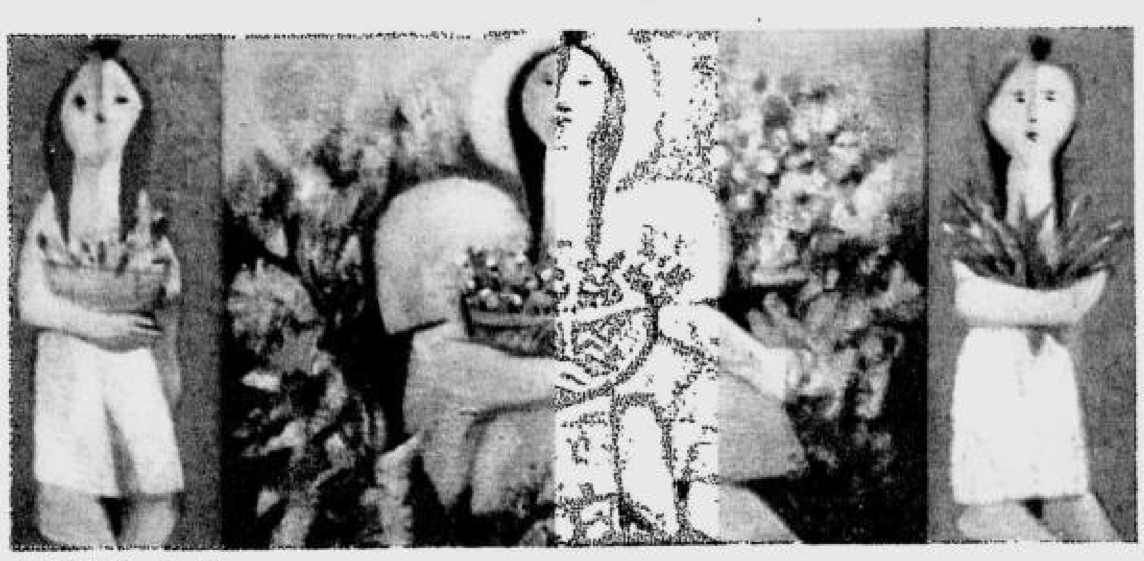
Malang's 'Oils' at West Gallery


"THREE Vendors"

MALANG CAPS THE YEAR as he started it, with a one-man exhibit that demonstrates his boundless enthusiasm for art-making. Although smaller in scale, the 10 pieces featured in "Oils," on view at West Gallery, Dec. 7-31, nevertheless shows Malang's continuing mastery over his materials.

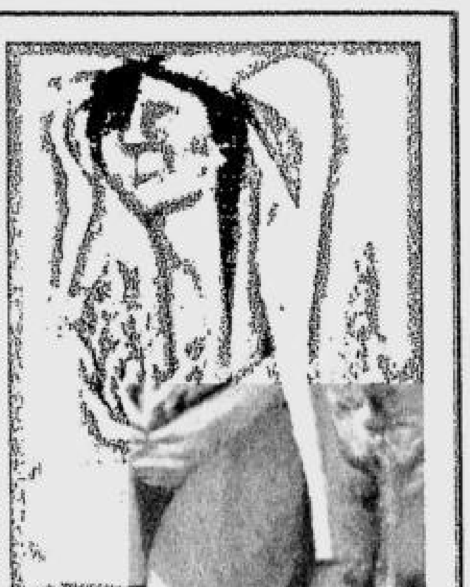
Never letting his age slow him down, the 78-year-old artist still paints as often as he can, making sure not a day passes where he doesn't doodle on his notebooks or sit in front of a blank or unfinished canvas.

"Oils" is proof that Malang never takes anything for granted, especially the opportunity to share his talent with viewers who always look forward to his new works.

His good disposition rubs off on his subjects and the colors he uses are sure to brighten any room.

Malang thinks there's always room to improve and it's what keeps him going, aside from seeing his creative output as giving thanks for the blessings he receives daily.

West Gallery is at 4/L, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong. Call 6341284.


"FLOWER Vendor"

Banglos sculptures are good Christmas gift ideas

BANGLOS SCULPTORS, FORMER FARMERS and fishermen, who now live in the Smart Amazing Gawad Kalinga Village in General Nakar, Quezon, have crafted sculptures that may be good gift ideas this Christmas.

The artists are really exiles from the killer-floods and mudslides that ravaged Quezon in December 2004.

Buyers of the sculptures assist the Banglos Sculptors Multi-Purpose Cooperative as well as the PLDT-Smart Amazing GK Village in Cebu.

Call 0929-4029936.

"TEDDY Bowl" and "Jenny"

Filipina captures Yosemite images in winter

COMMERCIAL AND NATURE photographer Edith Morales holds her solo show "Yosemite in the Grip of Winter" at the Bella Luce Gallery, Rada St., Legazpi Village, Makati. It will run until Dec. 15.

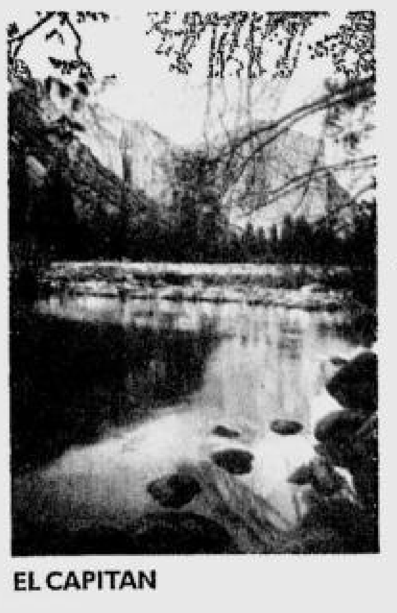
Morales, who went to New York for studies in photography, had dreamed of going to Yosemite ever since she started taking pictures. She had long admired Ansel Adams' breathtaking photos of the place and vowed to see for herself the cathedral of photography.

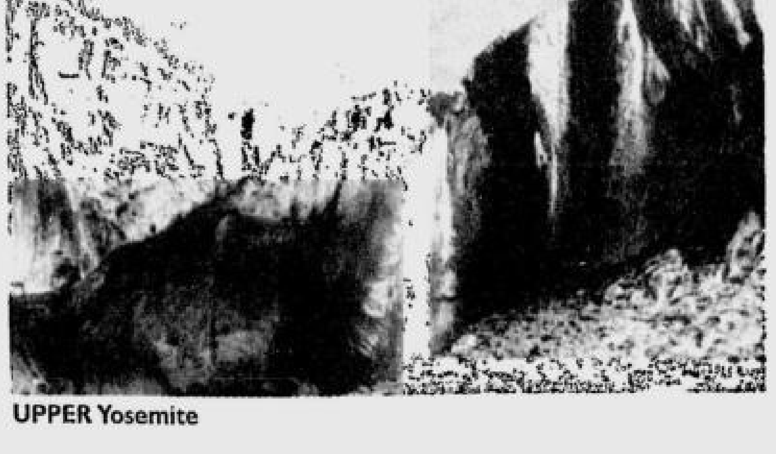
She set foot in Yosemite in 2003 and started building a photo folio.

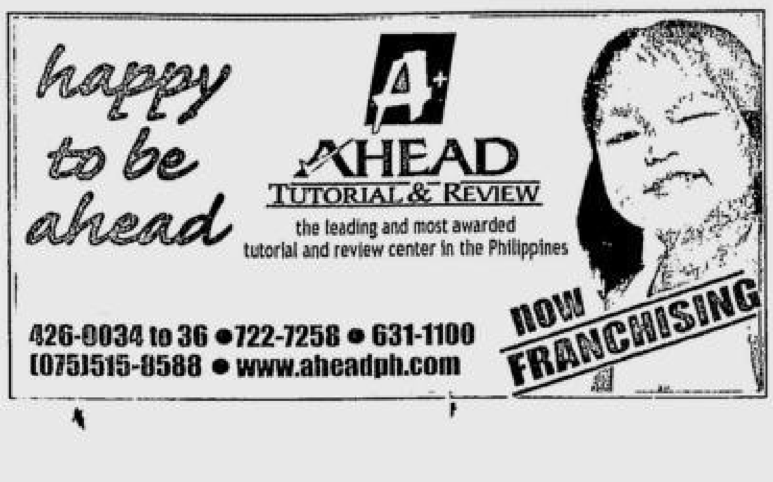
Take the famous Horsetail Falls, which demands perfect timing for the perfect shot. The site offers only a few minutes of sunrays, an ephemeral experience every photographer must learn to be quick on the draw.

Another time, she shot another spot called El Capitan. It was raining and the chill of winter was taking its toll. Using a film camera, she had to change film and had to hold the umbrella with one hand to protect her equipment and bring out a light meter. It would have been better if she had some filter, but she ran out of hands. It was the dead of winter.

"Yosemite in the Grip of Winter" will move to In Touch, 48 McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati, Dec. 16-Jan. 5. Call 8111507 or fax 8111508.


EL CAPITAN


UPPER Yosemite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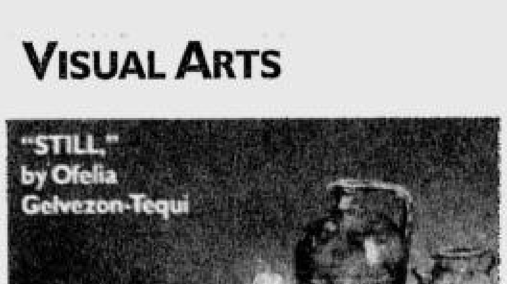
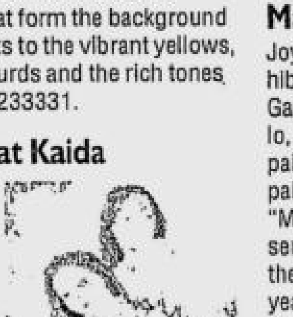

"STILL," by Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi

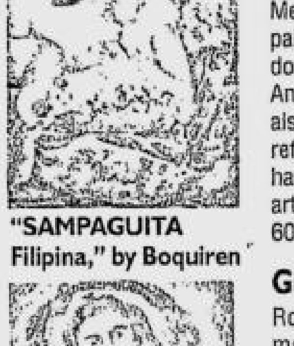
Gelvezon-Tequi at Hiraya

Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi presents her latest still-life paintings in "Still," until Dec. 30 at the Hiraya Gallery, 530 U.N. Avenue. The eight paintings depict ceramic containers and urns with gourds on a plain wooden table. The somber shades of grays and muted blues that form the background are poignant counterpoints to the vibrant yellows, reds and greens of the gourds and the rich tones of the earthenware. Call 5233331.

'Two Generations' at Kaida

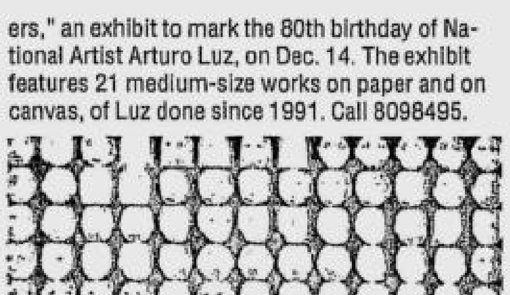
Kaida Art Gallery (122 GFO Bldg., Kamuning Rd., QC) will open the group show, "Two Generations," which combines senior and young artists, tonight at 6:30. Participating artists are National Artist Arturo Luz, Tam Austria, Remy Boquiren, Rafael Cusi, Andy Cubi, Jeff Dizon, Caloy Gabuco, Manny Garibay, Jun Martinez, Robbie Nubla, Ramon Orlina, Mario Parial, Fred Ramirez, Omni Reyes, Fatima Boquiren, Elmer Borlongan, Ruel Caasi, Michael Cacnio, Phapus Dizon, Ferdie Montemayor, Roel Obemio, Ernie Sta. Ana and Rodel Tapaya. To open the exhibit are Elaine Guanzon, Carmen Africa, Nemedia de Leon, Ken Takezawa, Hermie Liwanag and Alfredo Estrella. Call 4144777.


"SAMPAGUITA Filipina," by Boquiren


"MOTHER and Child," by Parial

Luz at Francesca

Galerie Francesca (Unit 2B-3B, 3/L, Treasure Trove, Festival Supermall, Alabang, Muntinlupa City) will open "Carnivals, Temples and Performers," an exhibit to mark the 80th birthday of National Artist Arturo Luz, on Dec. 14. The exhibit features 21 medium-size works on paper and on canvas, of Luz done since 1991. Call 8098495.


"PRAYER for the Dead," by Joy Mallari

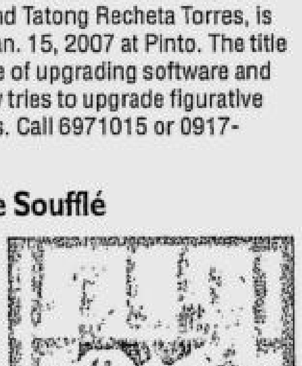
Mallari, 'Upgrade' at Pinto

Joy Mallari presents two simultaneous solo exhibits, "Ulinig" and "Manibalang," at the Pinto Gallery (1 Sierra Madre St. Grandheights, Antipolo, Rizal), until Dec. 15. "Ulinig" is a series of paintings combining the visual language of both painting and film; of still and animated image. "Manibalang" presents the artist's more recent series of works that reflect her observations of the Filipino diaspora in the US during her five-year residence in California.

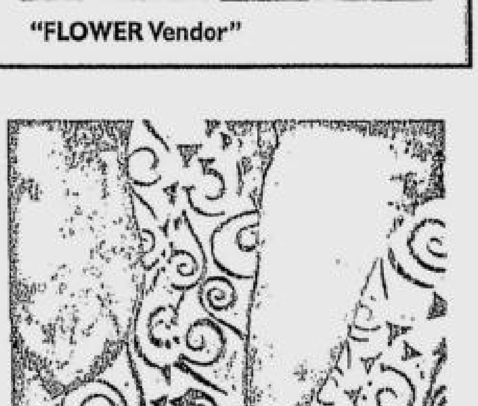
Meanwhile, "Upgrade," an exhibit of figurative paintings by young artists Marina Cruz, CJ Tañedo, Rodel Tapaya, Ian Quirante, Juanito Torres, Anton del Castillo and Tatong Recheta Torres, is also running until Jan. 15, 2007 at Pinto. The title refers to the practice of upgrading software and hardware. The show tries to upgrade figurative art in the Philippines. Call 6971015 or 0917-6050812.

Gutierrez at Le Soufflé

Romeo Gutierrez mounts his 27th one-man show, "Themes & Variations," until Dec. 31 at the Wine Bar and Art Gallery of Le Soufflé Restaurant (The Fort Global City, Taguig). The artworks reflect the multifaceted stages of the artist's life.



"Blending traditional and contemporary styles of painting, I created an electric mix of colors, shapes and textures to make vivid expressions of art," Gutierrez explained.


"TWO Lips," by Pia Benitez-Gutierrez

Benitez-Gutierrez at Fernando

Pia Benitez-Gutierrez holds her first solo exhibit, "Fearless Forest," at Galleria Fernando Artes (Casa Susana, Madrigal Avenue, Ayala Alabang). She uses acrylic and pen and ink to illustrate an illuminated fantasy forest. She explores the use of white ink to create patterns over bold acrylic backgrounds that represent trees and flowers. Call 8506963 or 0928-2188516.

LANTERN FESTIVAL AT CCP
A Christmas lantern made of garlic topped the annual "Parol Festival" of Bauan High School in Bauan, Batangas. The lantern is one of the 15 winning creations which will be on view at the Cultural Center of the Philippines starting Dec. 16. Admission is free. Call CCP visual arts division at 8321125 locals 1504-1505.

At the top . . .

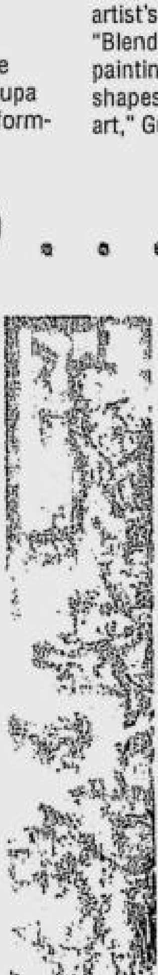
From page C1

ing summer, a relief to the oppressive cold. It helps that the best summer Wilwayco knows are Philippine summers. As Renato L. Santos points out in the very informative catalogue, "And so colors run riot, in alternately clashing/ dazzling/ delicious combination. Textures created by paint and appliquéd cloth run the whole gamut from thinnest and most transparent to the thickest, most opaque, and from smooth to the roughest passage of paint applied on burlap. There is, on the whole, a feeling of overflow and of plenty that can only be understood in the thick of a noisy and a gregarious Philippine fiesta. . . For what can be more hectic than a Philippine summer!"

"Spring" roughly approximates the searing celebration of "Summer." Explains Robert Bjorn O. Santos in the catalogue: "His rendition for the Spring series takes on a stunning palette of red orange, rose pink and fuchsia. This dazzling mélange of colors is stressed by the playful presence of yellow and peach."

The other seasons are painted evocatively. As Santos writes: "His compositions for the 'Winter' series have rigorous impastos that swoosh in divergent directions across the canvas, evoking the stinging winds. The combination of white, grays, and blacks presage the sinister mighty winds of winter."

And again Santos on "Autumn": "Wilwayco fuses pastels with metallic hues. This is perhaps his impulsive declaration that the air has become nippy. Simultaneously, deep greens, browns, and red-oranges emerge, suggesting the changing of the color of the leaves."


"SPRING II"

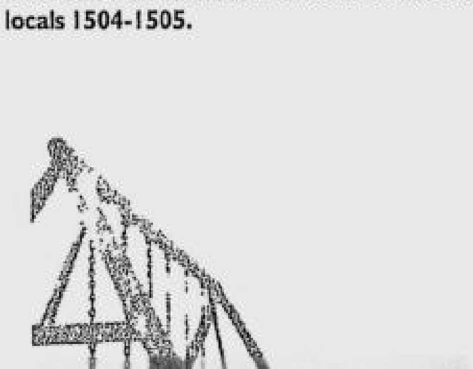
Tricky art

There's a spirit of futurism in the works without however the homage to photography. Futurism was an attempt to visualize motion in a pictorial fashion by projecting on canvas the successive stages of a movement, each stage a fadeout of the previous stage and a fade-in of the next. The technique was borrowed from the camera, and it was ingenious during its heyday.

Wilwayco's works are however a trickier sort since nature and her seasons cannot be faithfully recorded even by stop-motion camera: Even the weatherman after all can only do meteorological calculations in order to predict the climate. In the case of Wilwayco, he can only paint the seasons through manifestations of the spirit, not though graphic and pictorial renditions.

Perhaps this is where expressionism comes in. The expressionist employs his visual experience to release his subjective tensions in forms and colors; but there's no total abandonment of visible reality. If the impressionist seeks to record the play of light on surfaces of actuality, the expressionist sees with his mind and psyche, unraveling a cosmos and an order all his own.

But what is unleashed is never completely nonobjective. The expressionist subjects his theme into a demonic and spiritual drive, distorting or crowding the picture with manic, compulsive lines and colors, and what emerges is a torrent of passion, a storm-tossed canvas as it were, a free play of the seasons in colors and lights.



Art show at Casa San Miguel

CASA SAN MIGUEL IS HOSTING THE ongoing art exhibit, "2nd Hand Smoke," featuring resident artist Carlo Gabuco and guest artist Christopher Zamora, at Casa San Miguel's Siemens Hall. The show runs until Dec. 30.

The art show interprets on canvas the artists' take on social entities such as a lifestyle magazine, a reality TV show, a community website.

According to the artists, the influence these things convey is not as straightforward and one-dimensional as it may seem. They give direction and often eclipse the harsh realities of our daily life.

Gabuco and Zamora are multiawarded young artists from the Philippine Women's University's College of Fine Arts. The two-man exhibit was initially mounted at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. Call 9038657.

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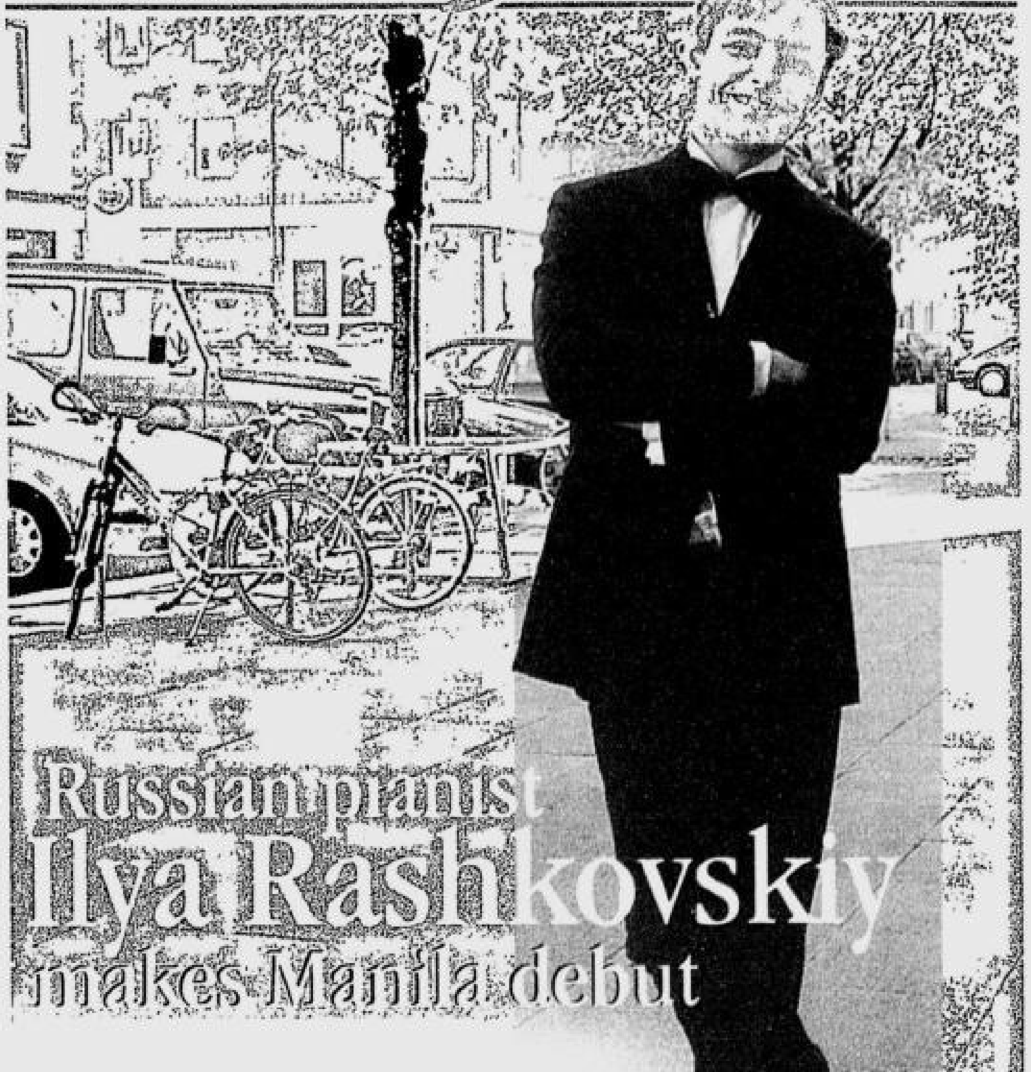


Russian pianist Ilya Rashkovskiy makes Manila debut

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

AFTER THE HIGHLY successful Russian Cultural Festival in June with Tchaikovsky laureate Dennis Matsuev, another Russian invasion will take place on Dec. 13 at Philam Life Theater.

Making his Philippine debut is Russian pianist Ilya Rashkovskiy, winner of the First Hong Kong International Piano Competition and also one of the top prizewinners of the Marguerite Long-Jacques Thibaud Competition in Paris.

What made the Hong Kong competition super-credible was the power jury composed of Vladimir Ashkenazy (chair), Leon Fleisher, Gary Fraffman, Vladimir Krainer, Cristina Ortiz and Pascal Roge.

Reported Chang Tou Liang, a piano pedagogue from Singapore and competition chronicler: "This was to be the competition of first prizewinners, and the carrot was a seeding system that allowed victors from earlier competitions direct entry into the second round.

"There were only seven takers, but no victors from Van Cliburn, Leeds, Warsaw, Moscow, Sydney or Hamamatsu. This figure eventually became six after Giuseppe Andaloro (winner at London 2002) pulled out at the last minute, having won first prize at the Busoni competition in Bolzano just days leading to this competition.

"There were also to be 40 entrants in the first round, but only 14 were selected to perform in what had to be the most leisurely five days of competition ever. By the end, only six would make it, to be joined by the six laureates, into the second round.

"Whatever the screening jury did, it paid off handsomely as the 12 quarter-finalists who performed at Hong Kong's City Hall Auditorium were a varied and interesting bunch, mostly worthy of their selection."

In the last round, Liang noted: "Ilya Rashkovskiy is without doubt the most polished and competition-savvy of all the candidates. He looked the part, and his every move and act suggested a winner. There was never an ugly sound in his playing, every thing tasteful and no hair out of place in his reading of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 24 in C Minor, K. 491. He also wrote his own first movement cadenza; it was idiomatic and oozed elegance from every pore.

"His Rachmaninov Third Piano Concerto was another example of the triumph of technique and finesse over individual will and license. Almost a 'model answer' performance of a great masterpiece, full of color and nuance, and not a foot wrong; the kind of playing that all piano juries just love, there was little if not nothing to fault or quibble about."

For his Manila debut, Rashkovskiy will play Mozart's Fantasy in C Minor; Schubert's "Wanderer" Fantasy I C Major; Scriabin's Fantasy in B Minor; Liszt's Fantasia quasi Sonata; Chopin's Fantasy I F Minor; and Balakirev's Oriental Fantasy-Islamey.

Call 9007023 or 0906-5104270.

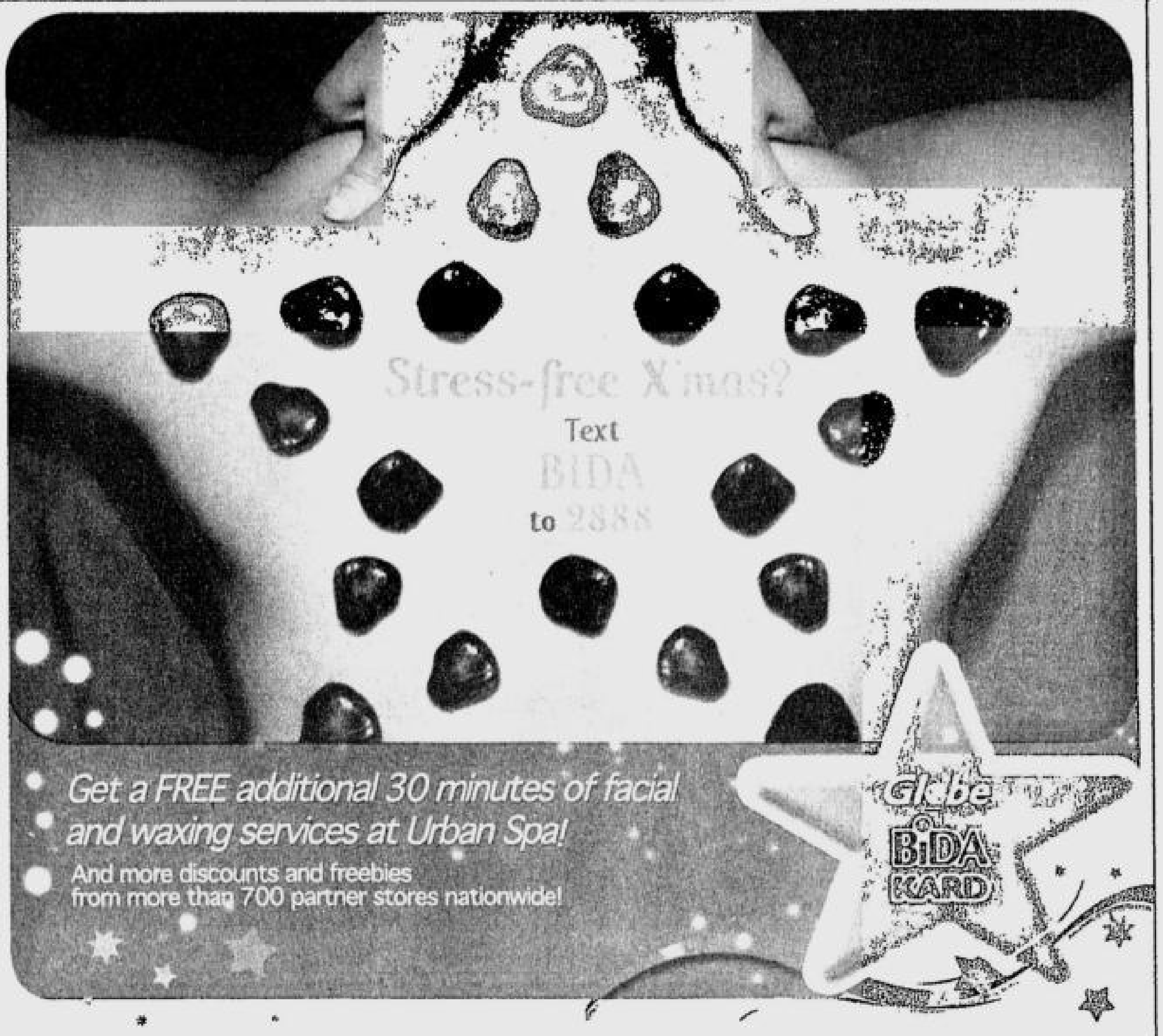
Dulaang Sibol's Christmas presentation

ON DEC. 11 (5 P.M.), 13 (5 p.m.) and 16 (6:30 p.m.), Dulaang Sibol of Ateneo High School stages its traditional Christmas presentation, "Come to the Manger."

The theatrical collage starts with the singing of Christmas carols; then the presentation of chamber theatricals such as "A Tale of Three Trees"; and for the finale, a mini-musical called "The Most Mischievous Angel."

Venue is Tanghalang Pagsanghan at Ateneo de Manila High School. Tickets are at P150 each. Call 9264305, 0916-0289633 or 0917-4016945.

A SCENE from "The Most Mischievous Angel"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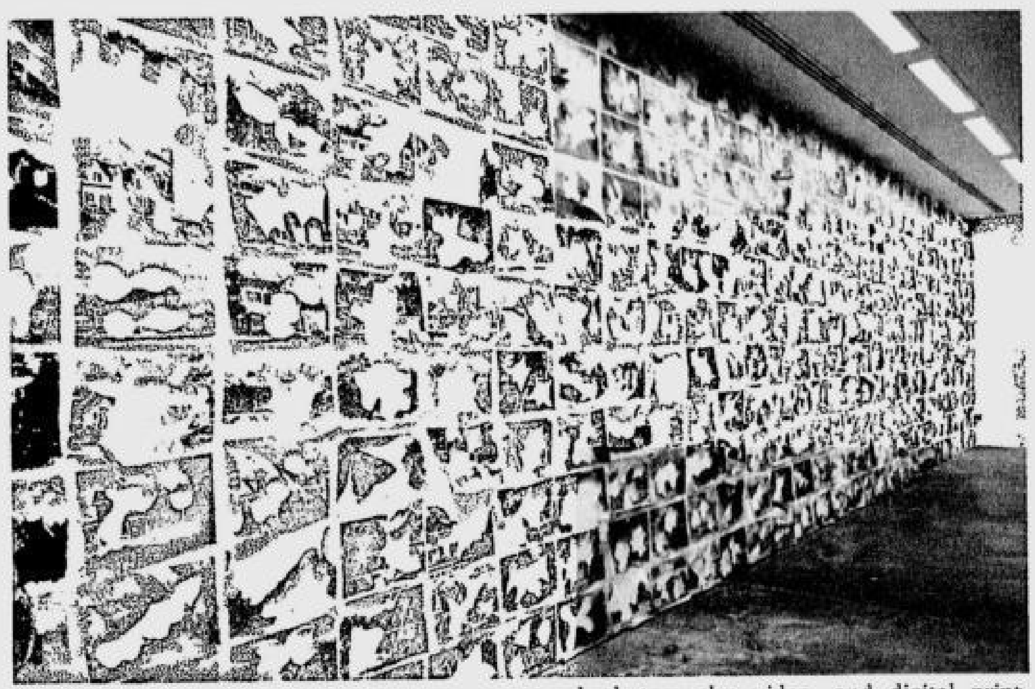
Does Palomar mean Pigeon House?

By Angelo V. Suárez
Contributor


"DREAM Houses"

"REPLAY," MULTI-MEDIA ARTIST Sandra Palomar's outtake at Silverlens Gallery in Makati after coming home from Paris, isn't so much a solo exhibit on recurrence and memory as a solo show of recurrence and memory—for to say "exhibit" implies the installation of old things, premade for the viewing pleasure of the passive spectator.

By "show" here we mean a spectacle prompted by the spectator's every gaze, each art object not just old but rather constantly renewed by visitors who by the very act of looking can already participate.

This sneaks back into discourse the traditionally maligned and excluded role of the spectator in artistic production, which Palomar highlights not by shifting attention to the audience per se but to the complex and much-ignored artistic process that involves the audience.

In making literal the notion of show, "Replay" entails serial Saturday events, the first of which is a reading of the exhibited text "Please Stop Asking What It All Means: It's Hard Enough Being an Artist," schematizing the multiple stages and layers of the act of creation itself by elaborating Marcel Duchamp's 1957 treatise "The Creative Act."

The schema is also illustrated on a large, white wall, and in the span of the show is gradually covered little by little with cutouts and random memorabilia—a visual translation of process' subsumption (if not erasure) under the more traditionally glorified product.

With the spotlight no longer on the artist as the sole author of any creative act, Palomar proceeds in the proceeding Saturday to talk about the artist herself as the first receiver of her own work, further complicating Duchamp's disparity between authorial intent and artistic realization by situating this disparity exactly within the same space, within the same author who conceptually doubles as spectator.

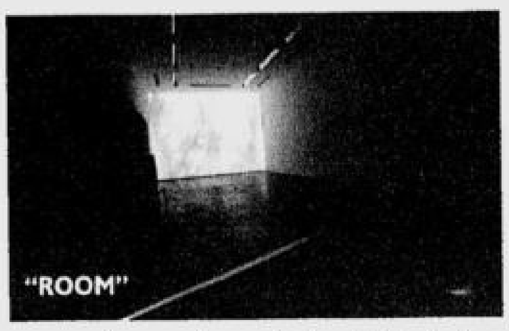
Precession of simulacra

Her cerebral focus on process or on art as a processional engagement achieves a play on what Baudrillard calls the precession of simulacra. Having been set in this theoretical context, the show begins when an up-sized, creased-in-the-middle photo of old, then meadowed Makati greets the spectator who has just entered the gallery.

This sets the show's overarching motif of simulation: Just as the realization of an artwork is hardly faithful to its author's original intent, can't reproduction, in photography, for example, also stay faithful to its original subject?

Palomar almost immediately supplies the answer when the spectator is led to a room with smaller prints of the same image—each of which is defaced with the inked words "imposter," "impostor" and "imponere," as if to imply that not only is betrayal at the heart of visual representation but also of linguistic representation as a language game: The trans-temporal remove accomplished by the old photo in the face of new audiences is also a trans-spatial remove, for a change in time is also a change in culture.

But the ingenuity of these images isn't so much in their juxtaposition against each other but in their directly facing Palomar's text on Duchamp within the same room, a subtle hint at art and memory's peculiarly painful relationship.


"ROOM"

But prior to entering this room, one's attention is first grabbed by what appears to be a window-like contraption on one of its walls, a small-looped video clip of branches on a sunny day swaying occasionally in the wind, their slow dance so gentle it can almost cure cancer. At the other end of the gallery is a larger room, a kind of viewing hall, where the same video image of branches is looped but made larger and at a different time of day. It is raining now, and the dripping water plays with the lens of the camera which records all movement, adding a liquid layer that abstracts the branches into a murky network that ironically becomes more soothing. The frame becomes a moving canvas, and the camera in itself as it penetrates another time frame becomes a new spectator to the spectacle of branches, its viewpoint changing with its context as time elapses. The room begs the question: Does the spectacle change when the spectator changes?

Manufactured dreams

Most pervading in the gallery is the long stretch of wall covered with printouts of houses, posh architectural designs that have randomly been folded and cut into, the absences in the middle appearing like white Rorschach patterns.

Collectively called "Dream Houses," the work complicates further the notion of reproduction: Do reproducible images pave way for reproducible dreams? Have our current aspirations—even domestic ideals—been mass-manufactured for us?

The ubiquity of "Dream Houses" seems to reflect the ubiquity of any image which has been mechanically reproduced. That Palomar has used photography, video, and digital printoffshoots of the capitalist dream itself that are handy extensions of Walter Benjamin's cinema as a medium for reproduction that leaves no trace of an original—indicates the depth of her affair with simulation.

Does "Replay" in this context aspire to becoming a process of finding this elusive original, as if it were an artistic Holy Grail; or does it exalt the very freedom that can be found in the disappearance of the monolith of originality, the crumbling of the hegemony of truth as cultural grammar?

One should not forget that grammar is always in the hand of a dominant class; and with the act of dreaming itself as a process, focus on it as such seizes attention away from product as capitalism's overvalued object.

One is, therefore, torn between melancholy and madness when caught in the middle of the third Saturday event, the performance of "Three Virtues." With the houses serving as backdrop, three performers assist Palomar in the execution of three exhaustingly repetitive actions for three hours.

Jia Mendoza folds a mountain of old clothes while blindfolded; Macy Cruz folds more printouts of houses and cuts through them while wearing earplugs; and Camille Banzon—for whom Palomar eventually takes over—carries a mirror with her all over the gallery as she describes in plain detail everything she sees reflected, in languages as varied as English, Filipino and French.

With every redundant fold and reflection, these actions do more than the obvious carrying-out of the motif of mimicry, they also seamlessly carry it into Palomar's procession by the extreme revelation of process.

The various media employed at the service of a solid concept makes "Replay" a veritable dovecote of a show. Or a pigeon house, really, if we go by what "Palomar" means in the act of finding meaning through translation. But what does Palomar really mean without having to resort to language games and a confusion of cultural grammars?

Please, just stop asking what it all means. It's hard enough being an artist.

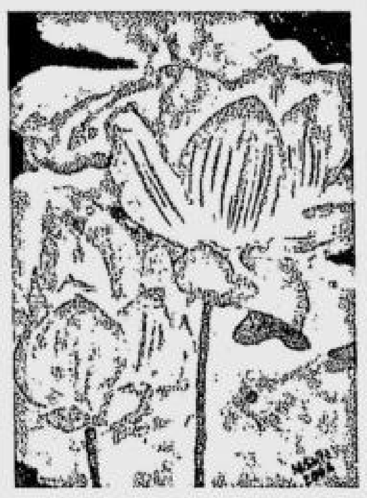
"Replay" is at Silverlens Gallery, 2320 Pasong Tamo Extension, Warehouse 2, Makati City. Fax 8160044.

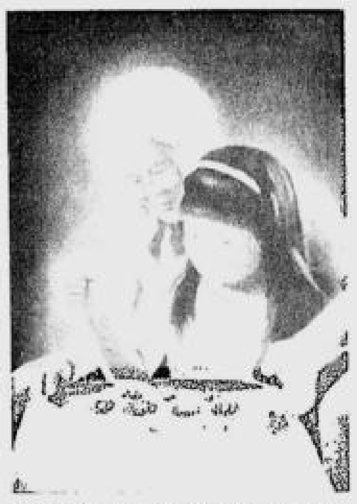
From virtual reality to communal art

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

RONALDO RUIZ IS A talented abstract painter whose restive persona spills over to installation and performance art, exploring multimedia technology. Like a modern soothsayer, he has mined the combined arsenal of art and technology with philosophical acuity, blurring their divide and disparity.

In his 13th solo show "Technological Sublimation" (Galerie Astra, 210 N. Garcia St., Makati City, until Dec. 7), Ruiz exploits the increasingly thin line between harmony and chaos, using semi-circular forms to suggest the conscious and subconscious realms. (The show is in memory of Angelito Matibag, a friend of the artist at the University of the East College of Fine Arts, where he graduated.)


"LOTUS Twins," by Manny Gaite


"LOLA at Apo," by Ed Gabres

With a panoply of finely textured and pigmented fields, the paintings offer disclosures on the artist's sentiments on artistic dogmas and precepts. The images perceive the zone that exists between the implicate and explicate orders, the site of imagination, his private template of dreams and fantasies.

The reductive process of abstraction—with buried as well as emerging shapes and forms—entices the viewer to participate in the tug-of-war.

In his signature work "White Noise," Ruiz posits that television and computer can, in fact, distort the minds of the young and the uninitiated. This he ably suggests with his installation of baby dolls watching another doll on the monitor with its hand and body heavily

FROM VIRTUAL/ D3

RONALDO Ruiz with his work

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Monday, December 11, 2006

ABC Christmas iba!

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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5	Nickelodeon				TNA Wrestling		Metro		Big News	Totoo TV		Global Shockers		Idols Heart To Heart		Sentro	The Apprentice		Lety La Mas Fea
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Inocente De Ti	Noypi, Ikaw Ba 'To?		Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World		Kapamilya Deal Or No Deal	Super Inggo (8:15 PM)		Maging Sino Ka Man	Pinoy Dream Academy		Bandila	Real Pinoy Fighter	Mirada De Mujer
AXN		Enough					E Buzz	Ripley's Believe It or Not		Beastmaster (Season I)		Ultimate Fighter (Season II)		The Amazing Race (Season X)		House (Season III)		Nip/ Tuck 2	
bTV	PBA TV	TV Shopping		NBA: Warriors @ Sonics					NBL: Crocodile vs. Singers				NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	NBA Warriors @ Sonics				
Cartoon Network																	Aqua Teen Hunger Force		
Cinema One		Ako Ang Huhusga				Bagong Buwan				Ang Erpat Kong Astig				Kontrobersyal				Lagarista	
Cinemax		Catwoman (3:15PM)				The Shadow (5:05PM)				Blind Justice				The Big Chill				Anacondas: The Hunt For The Blood Orchid	
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	World News Asia	Living Golf/ Revealed/ Main Sail Art of Life		Your World Today	
Crime/Suspense		CIS Chronicles: Cold Case Files		Law and Order: Special Victims Unit + 24		Profiler		City Confidential		Law and Order		Law and Order: Special Victims Unit + 24		Revelations		The Unit		Threshold	
Discovery Channel		Extreme Machines		Monster Garage		[illegible]		Deadliest Catch		Wild Discovery		Tribal Life		Flight 175: As The World Watched		I Shouldn't Be Alive		Deadliest Catch	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/ [illegible] Bunny	Mickey Mouse-works Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol	Lilo & Stitch	Emperor's New School/ I'll Be Home For Christmas	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Suite Life Of Zack And Cody		Buzz On Maggie/ Mr. Bean The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Extreme Programming [illegible] 2006/07		Atlantic Coast Conf. George Mason Vs Duke										Sportscenter Asia	LPGA Golf ADT C'ship Finals				Sportscenter Asia
ETC	Friends	Beauty and the Geek Season 2		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Project Runway 2		Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		America's Next Top Model 5		ET Weekend	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen (Degeneres) Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	The Biggest Loser 1		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
Fox News		Beltway Boys	Fox News Watch	Fox Report Sunday		Bulls & Bears	Cavuto On Business	Forbes On Fox	Cashin' In	Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Makita Ka Lang Muli	Now and Forever	Into The Sun		Dragonball Z	Ghost Fighter	Jewel In The Palace		24 Oras	Captain Barbell	Atlantika (7:45 PM)		Bakekang	A Rosy Life (9:15 PM)		Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita		Saksi	
Hallmark Channel				Judging Amy		Just Cause		McLeod's Daughters		Strong Medicine		Family Law		Judging Amy					
HBO			Murphy's Romance				Going Ape!			Secret Window				The Adventures Of Shark Boy And Lava Girl				Assault On Precinct 13	
Hero TV	Mythic Warriors	Sunny Pig	Inuyasha III	Mirmo de Pon	Saiyuki Reload	Naruto	Monkey Turn	Gundam Seed Destiny	Full Metal Panic	Galaxy Angels	Voltes V Evolution	Inuyasha II	Mirmo de Pon	Astroboy	Three-Eyed One	Naruto	Ganbaruger	Mythic Warriors	Yu-Gi-Oh GX
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Krusada Kontra Krimen		Japan Video Topics/ Ams		Japan Video Topics/ Ams		Travel Philippines	Japan Video Topics/ Ams	EBC Earth Files	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV		Bottomline		Afterburn		Cinema Tech	Evolver	Beat The Geeks	Street Smarts	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Trigger Happy TV	Jack's Booth				The Late Show David Letterman	
Lifestyle Network	Get Color	30 Minute Meals	Sweet Dreams	Rachel Ray		Smart Solutions	Embellish This	Barefoot Contessa	Everyday Italian	Martha		E! Extra: 101 Biggest Celebrity Oops		Rachel Ray		Isaac		Radical Sabbatical	Genuine Article
MTV Philippines		MTV Hits	8th & Ocean		Trick It Out	8th & Ocean	MTV Hits			Get Spotted	MTV Hits	Rockista on MTV	MTV Hits	Trick It Out	8th & Ocean	Celebrity Deathmatch	Jams	VH1 All Access: Awesomely Bad Career Moves	
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYXilog	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mobile MYX Top Picks		Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXilog
National Geographic		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Inside		Showreel Asia		Top 5		Nat'l Geographic Specials		WOW!		Top Gun Week		Triumph Of Life		ShowReel Asia S3	
NBN					Dyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Teledyaryo W/ Rey Langit & Angelique Lazo		Tayo Na Bayan (Kapihan Ng Bayan)		Dial M		Teledyaryo Final Edition		World Pool Championship					
Net 25	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	In Focus	Euromaxx	INC Chronicles (English)	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	Ang Tamang Daan		News Beat (Live)		OpenLine Live	Kapatid Sa Hanapbuhay	INC Chronicles (English)	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	Ang Tamang Daan		World Report	In Focus	DWTV Journal News	Euromaxx
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone/ The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	Danny Phantom	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Unfabulous	Unfabulous: The Perfect Moment			Romeo	As Told By Ginger	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Rachel Reveals				Hagkan Mo Akong Muli				Utang Ko Sa'yo Ang Aking Buhay				Tatarin				Malou Jesus Calderon
Qtv	Pawnshop No. 8	Samurai X	Hikaru No Go	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Winter Sonata	Irene	Emperor Of The Sea	Takeshi's Castle	H3O Hahaha...Over!		News On Q	Sapulso		Irene	Overseas Filipino Witness
RPN 9	TV Shopping	Buhay Pinoy Sa Telebisyon		TBA	Mr. Fighting	RPN Aksyon Balita		Complete Savages	Jake In Progress	Scare Tactics	GBB	Movie Monday				Newswatch Now	Go Negosyo		Kapihan
SBN 21								Sony Music Video				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Sony Music Video		Sony Music Video	
Solar Sports						WNCAA		Billiards: US 9 Ball		Sagupaan		Spanish League				Sportsdesk		Asian Games	
Star Movies			Romeo And Juliet				Final Encounter			An Unfinished Life (7:10 PM)				Ladder 49				I, Robot	
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Desire Table For Three		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	Life With Bonnie	Everybody Loves Raymond	The King Of Queens	Becker	For Better Or For Worse		Seinfeld	Life With Bonnie
Studio 23		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYXilog	Blog	Pinoy Dream Academy	Wazzup Wazzup	The Amazing Race	Lost (8:15 PM)		Alias		News Central	Rachel Ray (10:45PM)		Travel Time
UnTV				KNC Show	Kakampi Mo Ang Batas		Kaka at Claire Kaagapay Nyo		Public Hearing	Make My Day		Ang Dating Daan (8:15 PM)							

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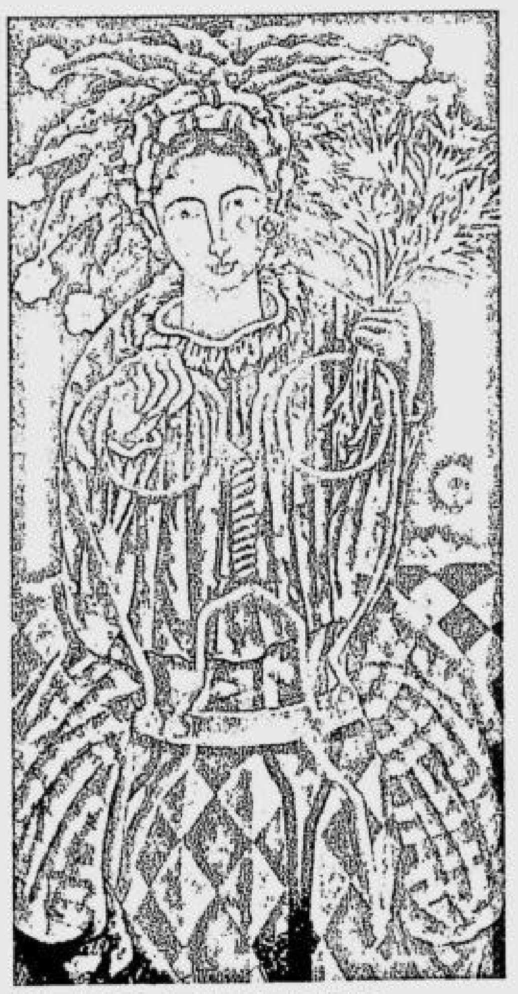


"SITTING Jester," by Mario Parial

Manila gallery opens in Singapore

GALERIE JOAQUIN HAS OPENED A gallery at The Regent of Singapore.

Galerie Joaquin (Singapore) Pte. Ltd. carries works of several leading Filipino artists who have been selected for inclusion in Sotheby's and other auctions. The artists include National Artists Arturo Luz and HR Ocampo and Philippine Presidential Medal of Merit Awardees Juvenal Sanso, Nena Saguil and Federico Aguilar Alcuaz, as well as auction favorites Mario Parial, Lydia Velasco, Ramon Orlina and Carlo Magno.

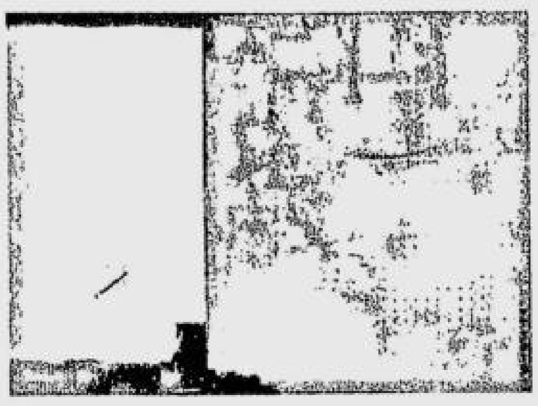
Galerie Joaquin Pte. Ltd. hopes to become a collectors' haven where art aficionados can find museum-quality artworks by Filipino artists.

Says Galerie Joaquin Singapore country manager Mike Magee: "As Singapore has become the regional financial and business center for many companies, the decision to put up Galerie Joaquin Singapore is both timely and auspicious."

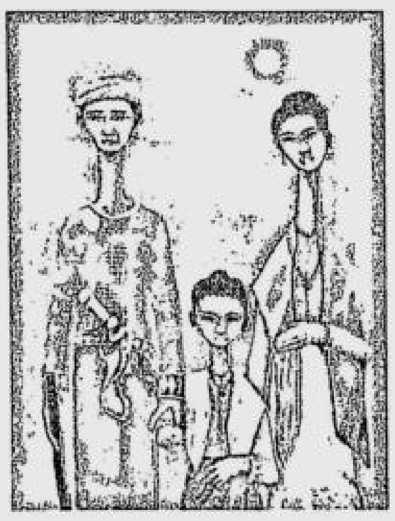
The Regent of Singapore is the same place where Sotheby's holds office and conducts its biannual auction of Southeast Asian paintings.

On opening night, Galerie Joaquin will also be presenting works by young artists Dominic Rubio, Eufemio Rasco IV, Vincent de Pio, Jerry Morada, Bayani Ray Acala, Karina Baluyut, Amador Barquilla and Joey Ibay.

Call 7239253.



"BREAD of Life" 2, by Carlo Magno



"BASILAN Family," by Dominic Rubio

From virtual reality . . .

From page D2

punctured with syringes. It is a sight both chilling and playful.

I have, over the years, watched Ruiz in a number of his performances, and in this particular show, his act echoes the subliminal message of his works in other media.

Here is an artist of genuine gifts, grappling with society's love-hate relationship with technology, with a wide range of materials at his command, and engaged in the public discourse on the effects of modern-day stimuli.

Agos

The Artists Guild of Sta. Maria, known by its acronym Agos, is a collective of 26 artists from Sta. Maria, Bulacan, which has turned itself into a multipurpose cooperative.

In its sixth show, "Sama-Samang Agos" (Galerie Andrea, in front of San Agustin Church, Intramuros, Manila), the group led by Manuel Gaite amply proves that art truly flows in abundance in Sta. Maria.

Agos has a number of homegrown talents that should steer the group to artistic heights: Alex Roxas, a winner in the 2003 AAP Annual (painting category); Rain Libiran, this year's top winner of the National Drawing Contest of the Philippine Drawing Society; and Caloy Caacbay, a talented watercolorist with a modernist sensibility.

This show has both strengths and weaknesses. For one, a good number of the works tread the path of the tried-and-tested, even the formulaic.

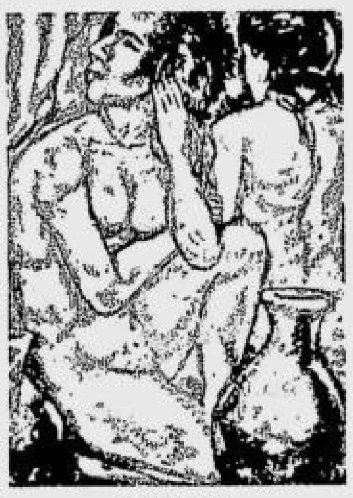
Also, the works reveal little of the culture and lifeways of the place other than those we already know.

Like other art groups, Agos members may have become too prone to merely following the leader; hence, some members become clones of their leader.

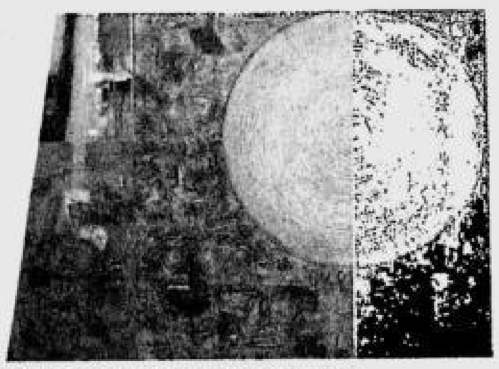
I imagine that the process of honing takes time and patience, as well as exposure to life, itself a never-ending cycle.

Thus, it becomes imperative for Agos to continually provide impetus to its members, one that goes beyond loans and logistics, but, most important, the passion to explore art for its own sake.

E-mail author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com



"NUDE" I, by Narciso Santiago.



"SUBLIMATION RR002," by Ruiz

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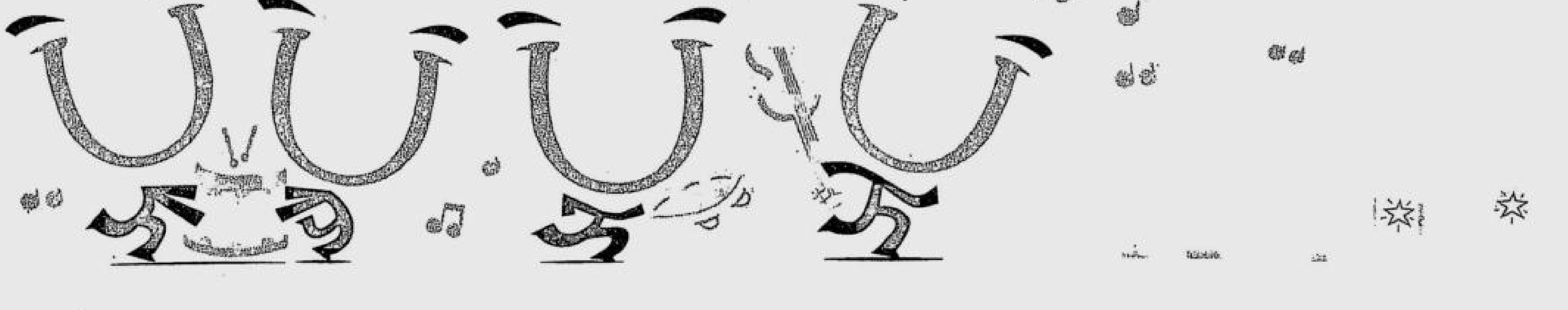

With *more energy, mas happy* mag-caroling kaya *mas happy* ang Christmas.

MULTIVITAMINS
ENERVON
more Energy mas Happy

Sto. Niño and Marian icons on exhibit

STO. NIÑO de la Casa Santa de Loreto, from the collection of Gino Marasigan, circa 20th century

THE THIRD OF A SERIES OF EXHIBITS TO celebrate the Centennial of the Coronation of Our Lady of the Rosary, La Naval de Manila, opens Dec. 16 and runs until Jan. 21, 2007 at the Museo de Santo Domingo, in Sto. Domingo Church, Quezon City.

The exhibit, Venite Adoremus, is conceptualized and executed by production designer and museum curator Rei Nicolas, PDGP.

According to the museum director, Fr. Ferdinand Bautista, OP, most of the images to be featured are from the collections of Tom Joven, a restorer of images, and Noel Abquilan, an interior designer.

Other items on exhibit are the antique vestments of the Sto. Niño de La Naval, the Sto. Niño de la Casa Santa de Loreto of Gino Marasigan and the collection of shadow boxes of handmade flowers with *estampitas* crafted by the sisters of the Beaterio de Sta. Catalina in Intramuros, circa 1920s, courtesy of Doña Carmen Reyes.

A rare mid-18th century polychromed, wooden bambino, from the collection of Rei Nicolas, with its original halo and ringlet hairpiece, is the focal point of the show.

AN EARLY 20th century Sto. Niño de Pasion from the collection of Rei Nicolas

SALVADOR del Mundo, a late 18th century Niño courtesy of Tom Joven

STO. NIÑO Amabilis, courtesy of Cresenciana Marasigan

Rare and unusual depictions of the Niño Jesus are also provided by the devotees such as Jerome de Jesus, Tony Adriano, Zeny Raymundo, Deng Tengco, Manny Castro and Raymond Naval.

Devotion to the Niño Jesus takes its roots in the great mystery of the Incarnation, "and the word was made flesh and dwelt among us," says John in his gospel.

To marvel at the sacred mysteries of the infancy of Christ—from his nativity to the adoration of the magi, and to his early years with Mary and Joseph—is to reflect on the great love of God for mankind, theologians have said. This love has been manifested in special devotions to the child Jesus throughout the ages.

As early as the third century, the feast of the Epiphany was already being celebrated in the Eastern Church. During the fourth century, a tradition was held placing the cradle of the child Jesus between two animals as foretold by the Prophet Isaiah: "the ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib."

REI Nicolas, curator of the Museo de Sto. Domingo

By the 16th century, the Franciscans initiated the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus.

Indeed, the childhood of Jesus is a popular devotion which is very much alive in the Catholic Church for nearly a thousand years—being adored by the early church fathers such as St. Athanasius and St. Jerome.

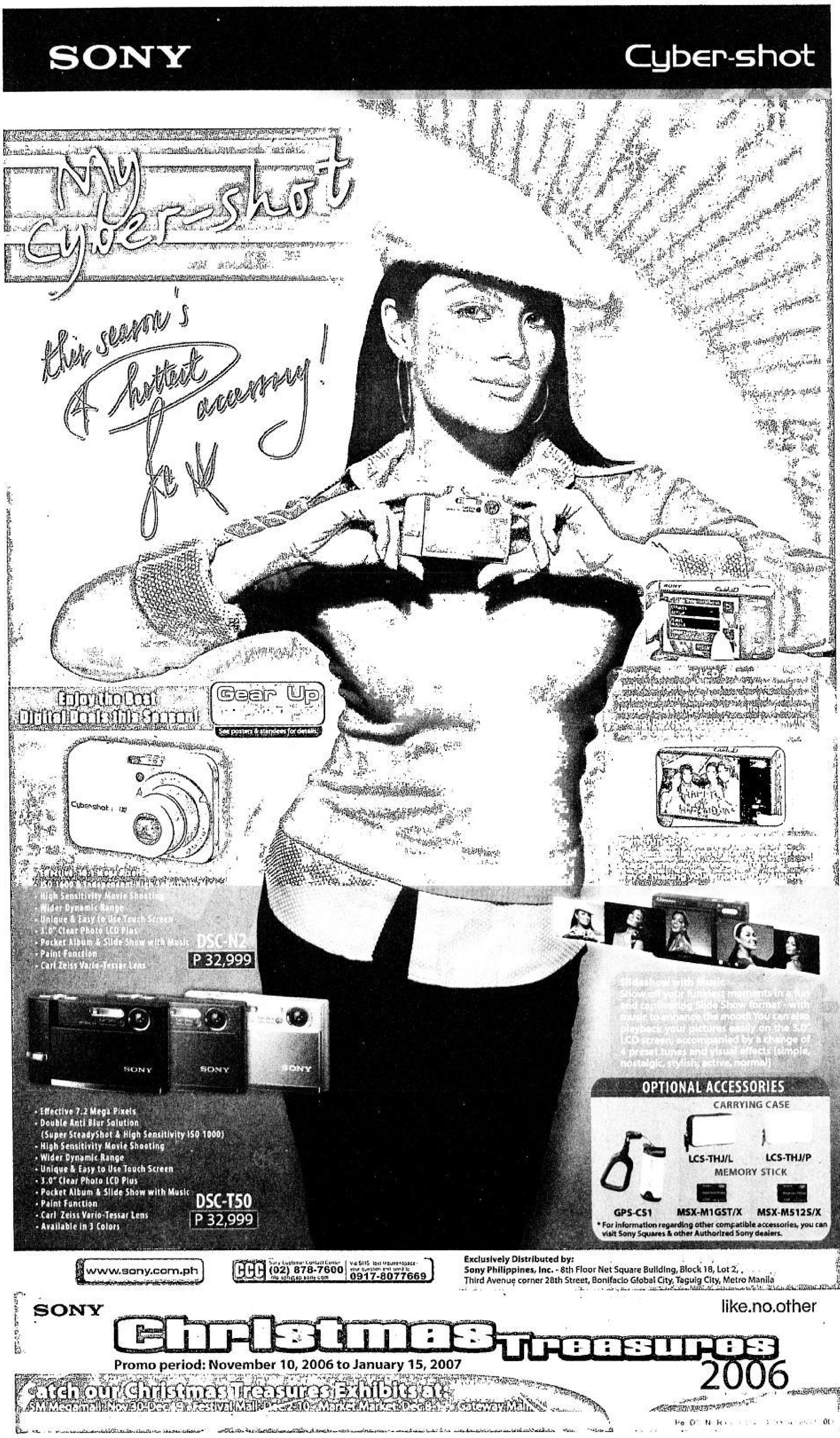
Many of the saints had a special devotion to the child Jesus like St. Bernard of Clairvaux and St. Francis of Assisi, who created the first tableau of the nativity. Some have been blessed by visions of Jesus as a child like St. Rose of Lima, St. Agnes of Montepulciano, St. Catherine of Siena and St. Anthony of Padua.

Stories abound that St. Teresa of Avila always traveled with the image of the infant of Jesus in founding her new convents in Spain.

It was the era of Spanish Baroque that set the stage for the various devotions to the infant Jesus, which then spread to the kingdoms of Europe before reaching the Philippines.

In 1521, Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan gave a statue of the holy infant to Queen Juana, which from that time on has been revered as Señor Sto. Niño de Cebu.

STO. NIÑO de La Vega, courtesy of Tom Joven



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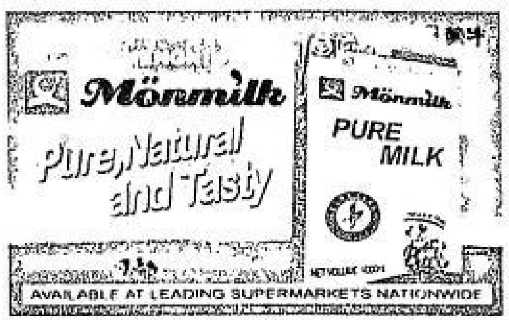
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The power of the PEN

WRITERS (from left) Bonifacio Ilagan, Gwen Galvez, Domingo Landicho, Malou Jacob and Susan Lara discuss literature in a "time of repression," while INQUIRER founder Eugenia Duran Apostol (below) delivers the José Rizal lecture.

PHOTOS BY MARC LAWRENZE CELIS

Quo vadis, litterae Philippinae? Apostles of the PEN ascertain their bearings

By Eldric Paul Peredo
Contributor

IF A SUDDEN ACT OF God (or of government) should come right now in this room," noted novelist Azucena Grajo Uranza, "the body of Philippine literature would be so depleted that the soul of the country would die."

It was Nov. 25, 2006, and the soul of the country was gathered in the Thomas Aquinas Research Complex auditorium of the University of Santo Tomas. Uranza was keynoting the Annual Conference of the Philippine Center of International Poets and Playwrights, Essayists and Novelists (PEN).

While the ordinary carried on in and out of the school, the brightest lights of Philippine letters were determining the latest literary and national issues, and the bearing the former might have on the latter, in a convention with the theme "The Ethics of Writing."

Philippine PEN founder and National Artist for Literature F. Sionil José led the gathering of literary titans, whose works Uranza described as embodying the nation's conscience. Conference coordinator was Elmer Ordoñez, while event sponsors were the INQUIRER, SM, National Book Store, UST and its official student publication, the Varsitarian.

Timely

No less than UST Rector Rev. Fr. Ernesto Arceo, OP, lauded the country's premier writers' group for so timely a topic.

"That [ethics] is a very relevant issue today, when everything is relativized, including the concept of right and wrong, in all areas of human activities," said Arceo.

Invoking Thomistic teachings, Arceo stressed that there should be more to the literary art than one that's merely for art's sake.

"St. Thomas teaches that any human activity in the concrete cannot be morally indifferent; writing is a concretely human activity meant to ennoble the human spirit," said the recently installed rector of Santo Tomas, a known breeding ground of conscientious writers.

Uranza would second the good Dominican's pontifications, saying

there is a spiritual force that impels a writer to voice out his epiphanies and discoveries on the human condition.

"The writer, more than others, perceives a reality more deeply embedded in human society," she said. "The writer must not only obey his instincts to express this. It is his duty to bring to the public consciousness the magnificence of life and the strength and sturdiness of the human spirit—just as it is his duty to reveal man's weaknesses and the way he has trivialized his own significance."

Everyone in the room was cognizant, however, that it takes much for a writer to practice, much more live, this particular ethos.

So said Uranza: "Relating to the public at large has its problems. The commerce of ideas brings with it confrontation with opposing forces—good and evil, heroism and self-interest and, today more than ever, life and death."

Indeed, the subtopics of the conference dealt with life and death issues.

New media

In "Literature and the New Media" session, which fictionist Charlson Ong chaired, journalist Lito Zulueta, fictionist and graphic novelist Dean Alfar, historian Ambeth Ocampo and poet Vim Nadera pointed out that the so-called democratization of writing by the Internet pitted inherent risks against the apparently beneficial facility of dissemination and discourse.

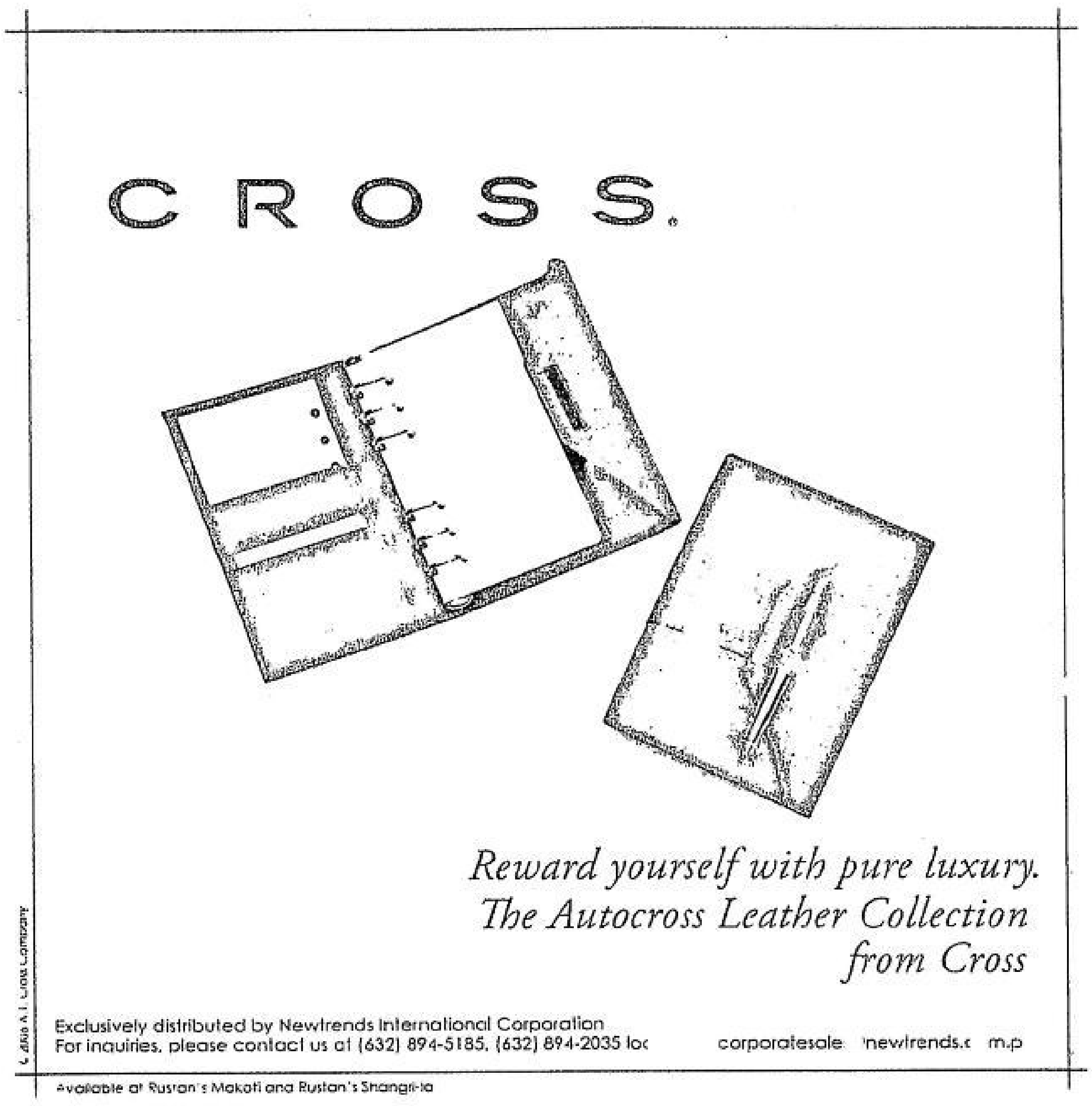
Alfar was upbeat. "Although not all material on the Internet is worth reading, there are sites of short stories, poems, vignettes and essays that are consistently of quality, and these are the ones that attract hits," he said.

In addition, the openness of the new media can give birth to an im-

THE POWER/ E2

FICTIONIST Jun Cruz Reyes and National Artist Bienvenido Lumbera

PLAYWRIGHTS Nicolas Pichay and José Victor Torres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The power of the PEN

From page E1

NATIONAL Artist and Philippine PEN founder F. Sionil José

FICTIONIST Dean Francis Alfar

mediate discourse between the writer and his critics, unlike in print where writers are spoiled and won't come out until their works are published and critics can do their stuff but with less effect, he said.

While Alfar and Nadera suggested the use, albeit with care, of the information superhighways to promote literature, Zulueta and Ocampo lamented the breach of ethical guides created by the print medium as well as the ironic difficulty of recording history despite the new media's seemingly limitless possibilities.

"In print media, there are gatekeepers like editors and publishers, who create a mechanism of ethical guides. Electronic media may have broken all of these guides. Blog journalism can now be published in personal websites," Zulueta said. "Are all of these so-called writings worth reading? The problem now is how to make electronic media serve the ends of society."

Ocampo, meanwhile, underscored how the new media have cultivated an apparent aversion to paper and print, and the great effect this has in record-keeping. "Students find it jurassic to go to the library these days," he said.

According to Ocampo, risks abound in the use of the new media, and certain values have gone.

"We don't keep text. We push delete buttons and have paper shredders," Ocampo said. "Journalists don't sit with editors anymore. They use e-mail. They phone-in for interviews, and are not able to see facial expressions and nuances."

Repression

More pressing for the congress, however, were the issues of human freedom and repression, discussed by two panels chaired by Domingo Landicho and National Artist Bienvenido Lumbera.

As Uranza stated, "Of all the issues we writers face, the one that hits hardest home is this control over the writer on what he can write and cannot write."

Literature being a passport into a part of life that is the zone of freedom is only insofar as the reader is concerned, said Susan Lara. From the point of view of the writer, literature can imprison, literally and otherwise.

But "the writer who is imprisoned can still soar with her own imagination," she said.

The names of poet Axel Pinpin, who was supposed to be one of the discussants but was arrested in October for alleged insurgent activities, and the brothers José and Emman Lacaba, who battled Marcos with their writing during martial law, are examples of writers who have fought attempts by state forces to silence expression.

From the point of view of journalism, Newsbreak publisher Marites Vitug blamed the fragility of and inequity in "democracy, Philippine-style" for the hampered exchange of ideas.

"Media organizations operate within these contexts: Corruption is one of our problems. There are few independent and responsible media organizations, and media as an institution is hobbled by vested interest and unethical practices," she said.

Hence, the creators and deliverers of ideas themselves are weak and frightened by a "culture of impunity," with journalists and other writers sued, arrested or killed right and left.

NOVELIST Azucena Grajo Uranza

FICTIONIST and SEA Write laureate Domingo Landicho

"Literature must be unhampered by such restrictions as the Presidential Proclamation 1017 or any manifestation of the so-called calibrated pre-emptive response," said Bonifacio Ilagan. "If writing is to express human freedom, it must be able to say what was forbidden to be said by the power weilders."

It is harder, however, for some writers. Hagonoy-based Jun Cruz Reyes lamented how he did not have the courage to write about the military takeover of his small library in the course of the Armed Forces hunt for insurgent leftists.

Reyes, who conducts literary workshops in Bulacan, humorously compared the dangers of writing with writers' natural health risks. But the spoonful of sugar did not hide his anxiety over the military repression in Hagonoy, home to writers such as Amado Hernandez, Blas Ople, Patricio Dionisio and Simeon Rodriguez.

"It has become difficult to say that I love my town," Reyes said in Filipino. "Help me; should I give up writing, or smoking?"

Lawyer-dramatist-poet Nicholas Pichay discussed other forms of repression such as gender repression and homosexuality.

Writers are prevented by bosses and a prudish community from exploring these topics, but with dubious standards, the source of which we do not know, Pichay said.

Education solution

Ramon Magsaysay Awardee and INQUIRER founding chair Eugenia Duran Apostol delivered the José Rizal lecture over a sumptuous lunch.

A figure of defiance during the Marcos regime, Apostol said education was still the key to true independence and a freer, healthier discourse of ideas. Rizal knew this when he broke away from the other propagandists to focus on education reform, she said.

"Rizal did not live to see the changes in Philippine society during the American Occupation," Apostol said. But he would have been "disappointed later with the education system's decline that accelerated during the martial law years."

This further deteriorated even after two People Power revolutions, when "all that we had reclaimed through People Power—our democratic institutions, our freedom of expression and our dignity as Filipinos" are again at risk "if our youth had no opportunity to discover, nurture and protect these freedoms."

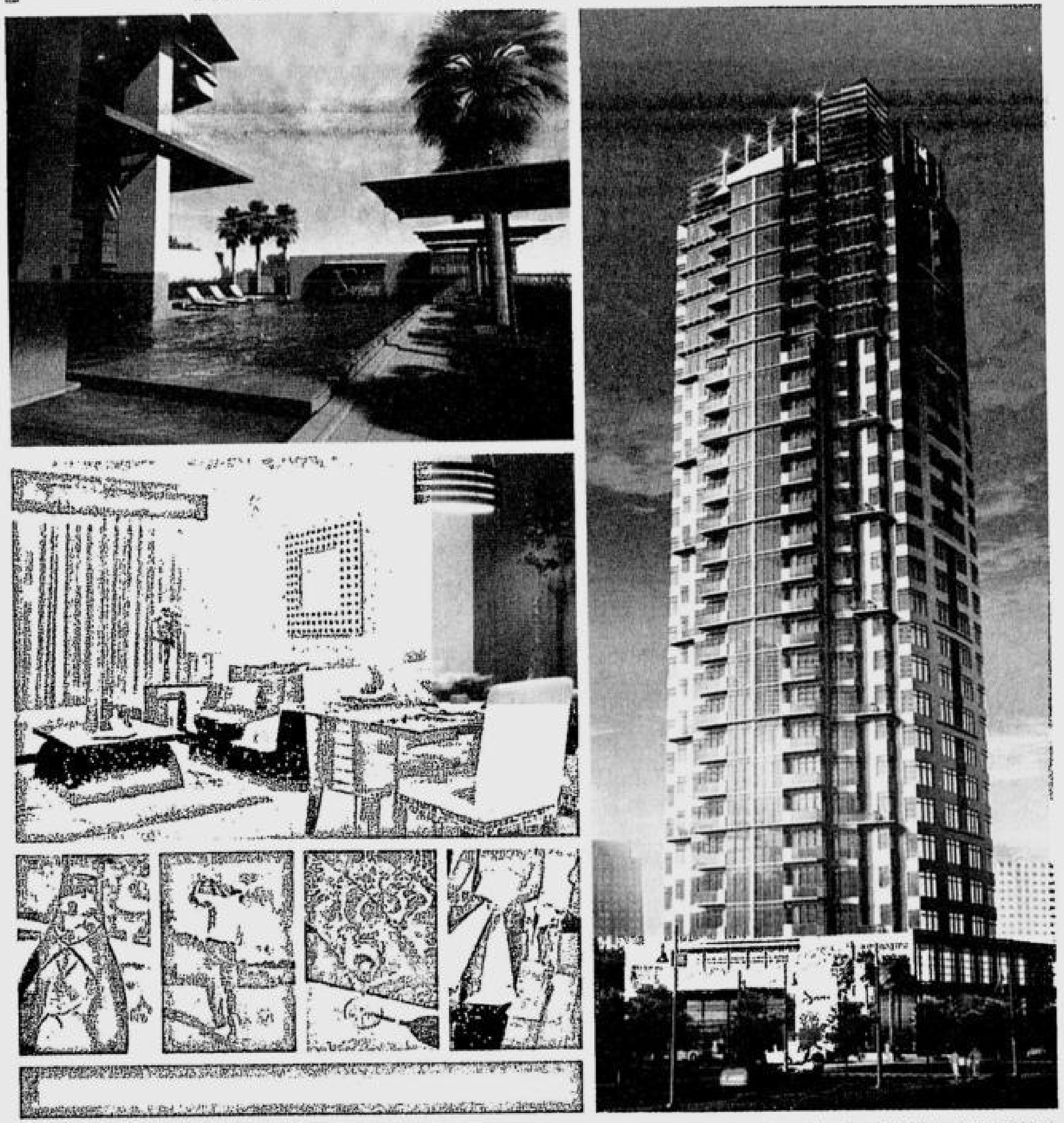
Apostol said the task of sustaining quality education for all regardless of status was "nothing short of quixotic." The scenario: Only 3,000 elementary schools passed the National Achievement Test this year out of a total 29,000, and there are high school students who can barely comprehend written lessons.

"How can you expect these young men and women to enjoy literary masterpieces? How can they 'discuss, debate, and communicate,' when they have to struggle through the simple act of reading?"

But for educational reform to work, Apostol pointed out that there should also be measures "made to improve the teacher's professional capacity, values and motivation."

"For Rizal, the preparation for independence was education in its broadest sense—the formation of a people who would be worthy of their freedom and would protect it from its new

THE POWER/E3



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Gloria Goloy, Doris Trinidad to receive literary honors

NOTED FILIPINO JOURNALIST-POETS GLOria Garchitorena-Goloy and Doris Trinidad-Gamalinda will be honored by the Varsitarian, the 78-year-old official student publication of the University of Santo Tomas, on its 22nd USTetika Annual Awards for Literature Dec. 16.

The two will receive the Parangal Hagbong, the award to UST writers for lifetime achievement in letters.

Goloy was Varsitarian literary editor and and associate editor in the late 1940s and later worked as assistant editor of the Philippine National Red Cross Magazine, editor of Coed Magazine and associate editor of the Manila Times Yearbook Progress Report. She was editor of the Sunday Times Magazine from 1963 to 1972.

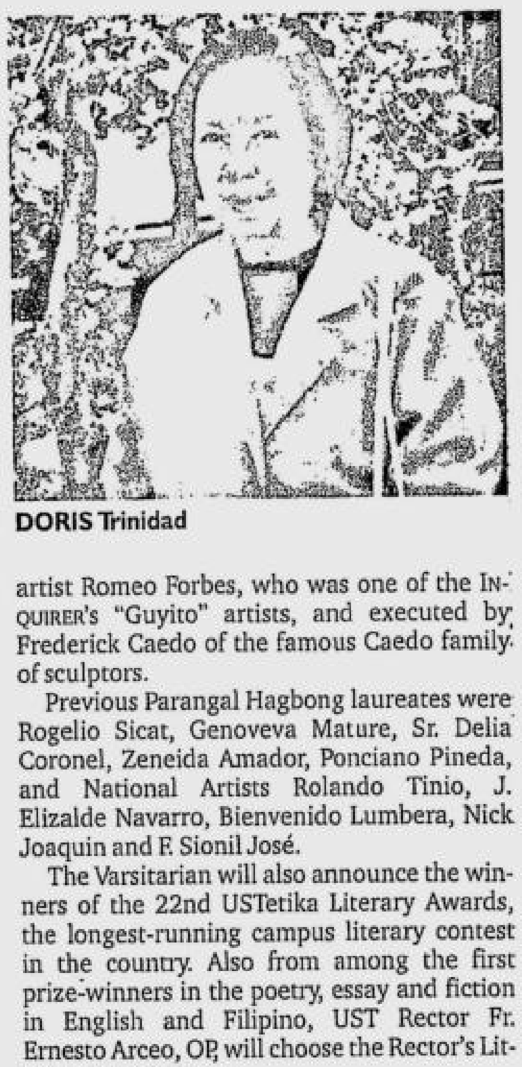
In retirement, she edited the parish newsletter of Paco Church, Manila. Goloy is also known for her collection of poems and short stories such as "Adams and Eve and Other Poems" (1969) and "At the Crossroads" and for her essay collection, "A Housewife in the World of Sports" (1997).

A former Varsitarian literary editor from 1946 to 1948, Doris Trinidad was former editor of the women's section of the Manila Times and later, the Times Journal. She also edited People Magazine and Women's Home Companion Magazine before her retirement in 1992.

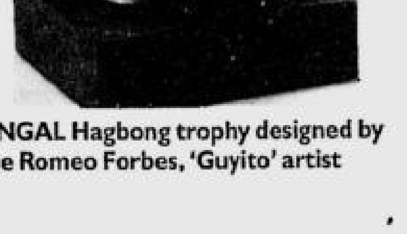
In retirement, Trinidad, the mother of Fil-Am fictionist Eric Gamalinda, wrote books such as "Permutations of Love: Looking Glass 2" (1996), "The Way of the Miracle" (1999), "Mysteries & Memories" (2000) and "Now and Lifetimes Ago" (2001). She received the National Book Award in 2000.

Goloy and Trinidad will receive the Hagbong trophies designed by the late young artist Romeo Forbes, who was one of the INQUIRER's "Guyito" artists, and executed by Frederick Caedo of the famous Caedo family of sculptors.

GLORIA Garchitorena-Goloy



DORIS Trinidad



PARANGAL Hagbong trophy designed by the late Romeo Forbes, 'Guyito' artist

Previous Parangal Hagbong laureates were Rogelio Sicat, Genoveva Mature, Sr. Delia Coronel, Zeneida Amador, Ponciano Pineda, and National Artists Rolando Tinio, J. Elizalde Navarro, Bienvenido Lumbera, Nick Joaquin and F. Sionil José.

The Varsitarian will also announce the winners of the 22nd USTetika Literary Awards, the longest-running campus literary contest in the country. Also from among the first prize-winners in the poetry, essay and fiction in English and Filipino, UST Rector Fr. Ernesto Arceo, OP, will choose the Rector's Literary Award winner.

Among the judges this year were Teo Antonio, Vim Nadera Jr., Marra Lanot, Jun Balde, Michael Coroza, Roberto Añonuevo and Dean Francis Alfar.

The power of the PEN

From page E2

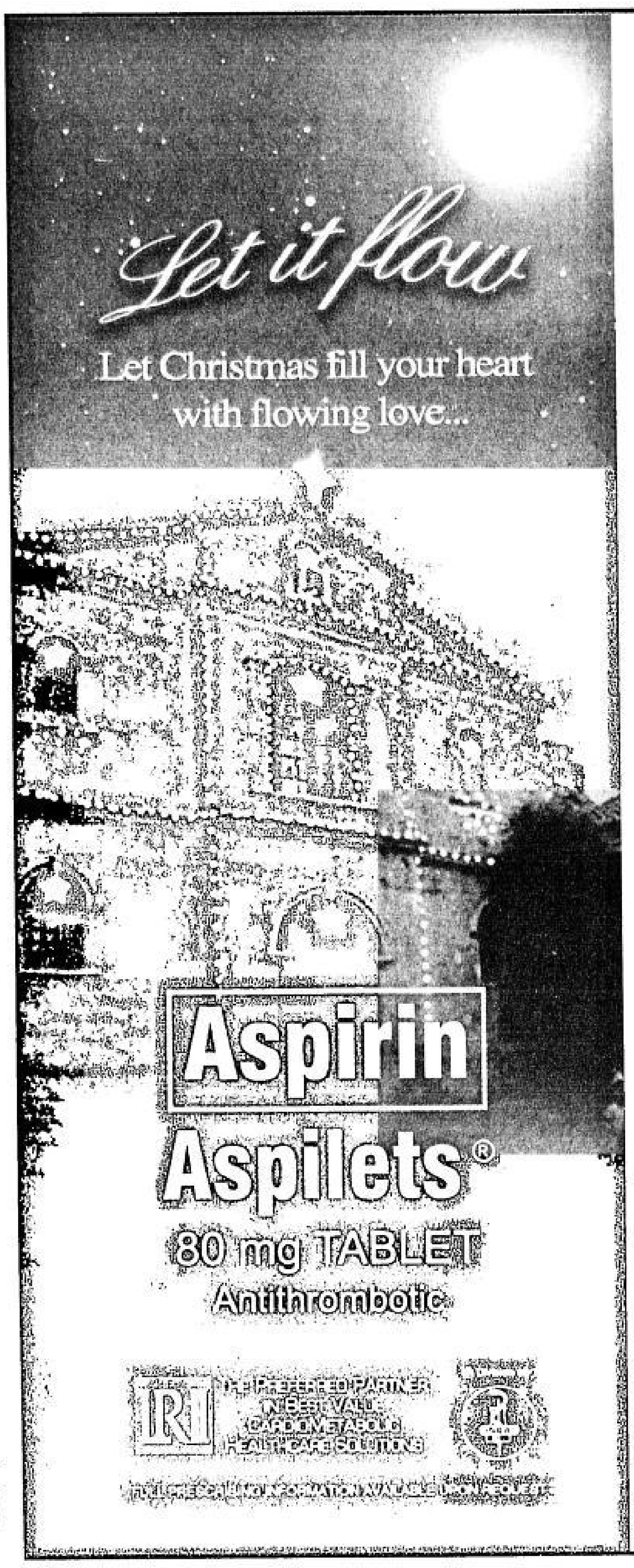
tyrants," Apostol said. "Education is the key to our deliverance."

Diverse audience

The venue, aside from providing a homecoming feeling to many of the PEN members, was strategically appropriate. Besides the members, the audience was composed mostly of campus writers, students and teachers. It was a fulfillment of PEN founder Sionil José's express command during the organizational meetings that the younger demographic be more involved.

While the PEN is an organization of writers across all genres, the bulk of its members and conference attendants have always come from the world of creative literature. The presence of non-creative writers was not unwelcome, however. Inasmuch as, like Salvador Lopez once put it, society is the fount from which the literary writer draws his material, the diversity ensured a more encompassing exchange of ideas. The theme, in any case, did not refer to any particular sort of writing, but anything that aims to foster this exchange for a healthier society.

The ordinary carried on in the university that day. But society was changing in that hall where writers congregated.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Let it flow, let it flow, let it flow...

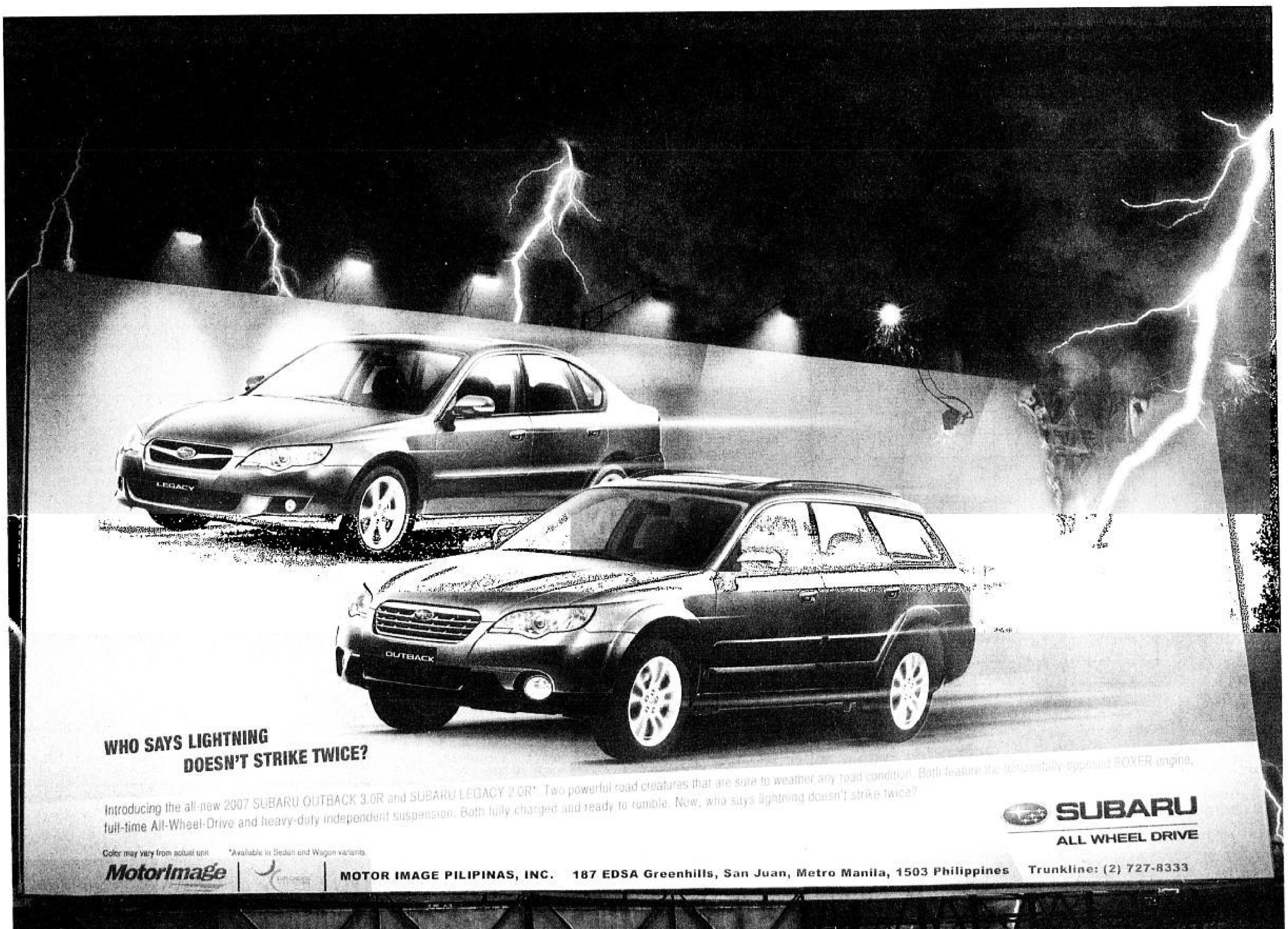
It is the yuletide season once again, the most anticipated year-ender that signifies the onset of nostalgic Filipino traditions such as Christmas Carols, Simbang Gabi and the favorite Noche Buena. Everyone delights in the wide food selection served in successive celebrations of these events running from company Christmas parties, Family Reunions to the ultimate feast on the eve before Christmas.

Although one cannot avoid consuming extra amount of food than usual, the heart should be kept constantly on guard, especially people with hypertension and diabetes, by avoiding risks from such indulgence. Hypertension and diabetes already pose a higher risk of plaque formation and blood clots which can block the natural flow of blood in the body. These blood clots can thereby lead to serious cardiovascular events, even death.

In these times of celebrations, maintaining a healthy diet can reduce risk factors such as high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure and excess body weight, preventing the patient from heart attack and stroke. This includes eating a variety of fruits and vegetables, including fish, lean meats and skinless poultry in your meals, limiting intake of foods high in calories or low in nutrition, and minimizing eating foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol. For greater protection, the American Heart Association* also recommends the daily dosage of aspirin for those in high risk of developing heart attack and stroke. **Aspilets**, the Gold Standard for Primary Prevention of Heart Attacks and Strokes, is most commonly known for its blood-thinning effect or **"pampalabnaw ng dugo"**. This helps prevent complications by stopping blood platelets from sticking together, and thus reduces the chance that blood clots will form and block arteries. Aspilets ensures that in times of hectic seasons like Christmas, the heart is well prepared for its demands.

With or without an occasion, it always takes a simple amount of prevention to keep the heart in the right condition-healthy diet and the right dosage of aspirin. While caught in the overflow of the season's banquet, keep your heart healthy with the Right Lifetime Partner. Confidently with Aspilets, we can let it flow.

**American Heart Association; Diabetes, Heart Disease and Stroke: "What about other stroke risk factors?" p.7*



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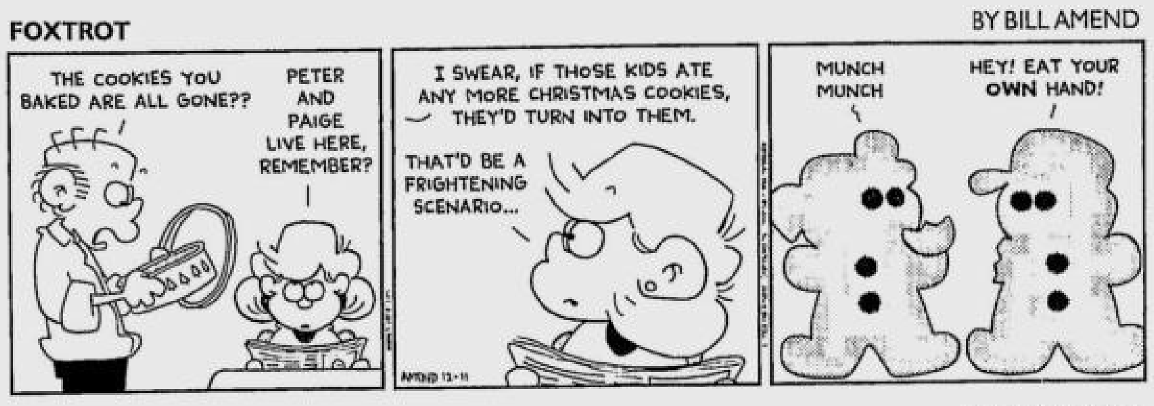
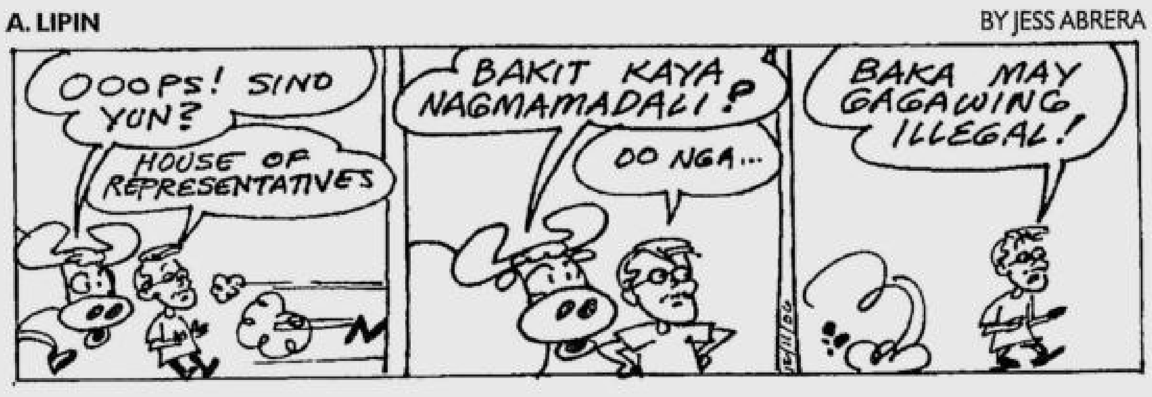
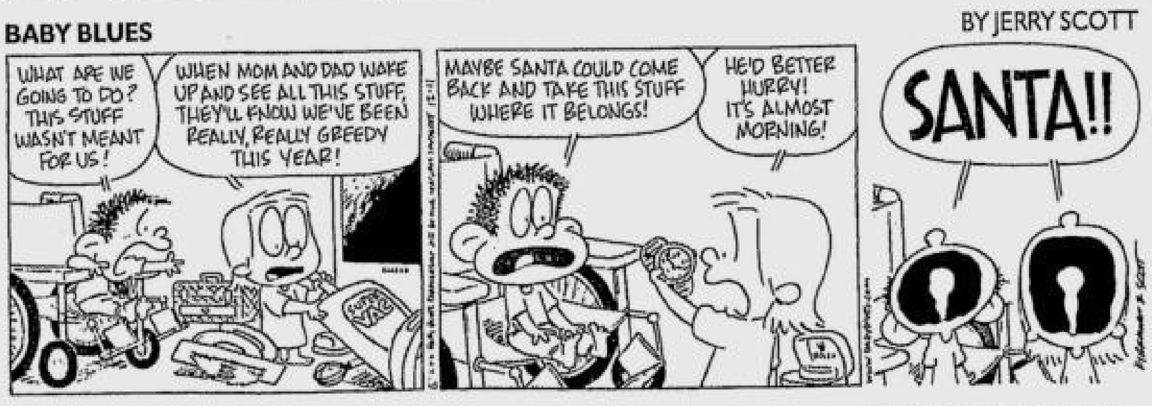
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


THE COOKIES YOU BAKED ARE ALL GONE??
PETER AND PAIGE LIVE HERE, REMEMBER?
I SWEAR, IF THOSE KIDS ATE ANY MORE CHRISTMAS COOKIES, THEY'D TURN INTO THEM.
THAT'D BE A FRIGHTENING SCENARIO...
MUNCH MUNCH
HEY! EAT YOUR OWN HAND!
AMEND 12-11

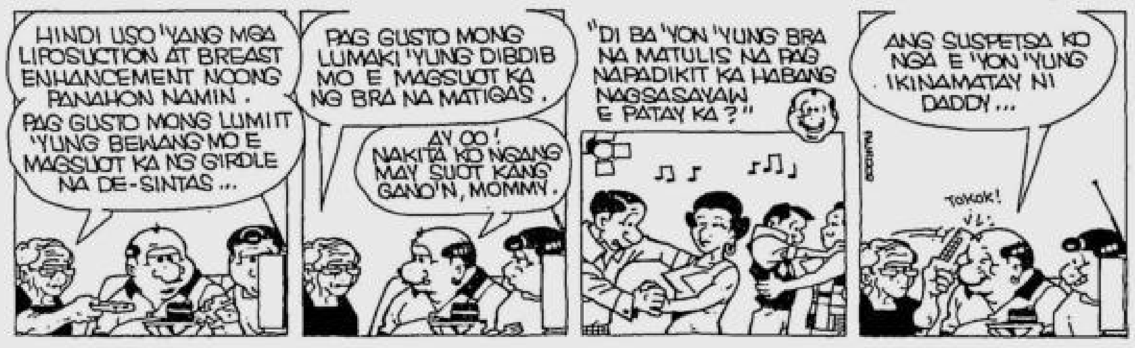
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


OOOPS! SINO YUN?
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BAKIT KAYA NAGMAMADALI?
OO NGA...
BAKA MAY GAGAWING ILLEGAL!

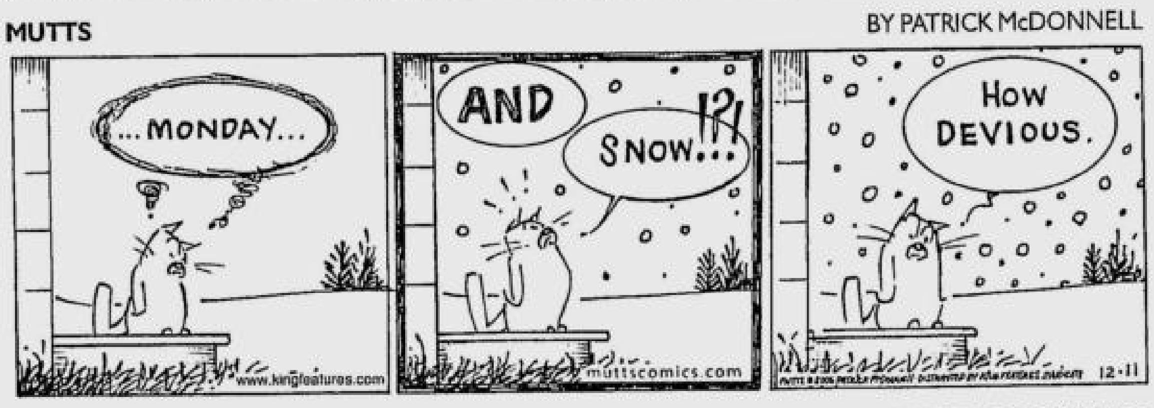
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO? THIS STUFF WASN'T MEANT FOR US!
WHEN MOM AND DAD WAKE UP AND SEE ALL THIS STUFF, THEY'LL KNOW WE'VE BEEN REALLY, REALLY GREEDY THIS YEAR!
MAYBE SANTA COULD COME BACK AND TAKE THIS STUFF WHERE IT BELONGS!
HE'D BETTER HURRY! IT'S ALMOST MORNING!
SANTA!!

PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


HINDI USO 'YANG MGA LIPOSUCTION AT BREAST ENHANCEMENT NOONG PANAHON NAMIN.
PAG GUSTO MONG LUMIIT 'YUNG BEWANG MO E MAGSUOT KA NG GIRDLE NA DE-SINTAS...
PAG GUSTO MONG LUMAKI 'YUNG DIBDIB MO E MAGSUOT KA NG BRA NA MATIGAS.
AY OO! NAKITA KO NGANG MAY SUOT KANG GANO'N, MOMMY.
"DI BA 'YON 'YUNG BRA NA MATULIS NA PAG NAPADIKIT KA HABANG NAGSASAYAW E PATAY KA?"
ANG SUSPETSA KO NGA E 'YON 'YUNG IKINAMATAY NI DADDY...
TOKOK!

MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


...MONDAY...
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SNOW!?!
HOW DEVIOUS.
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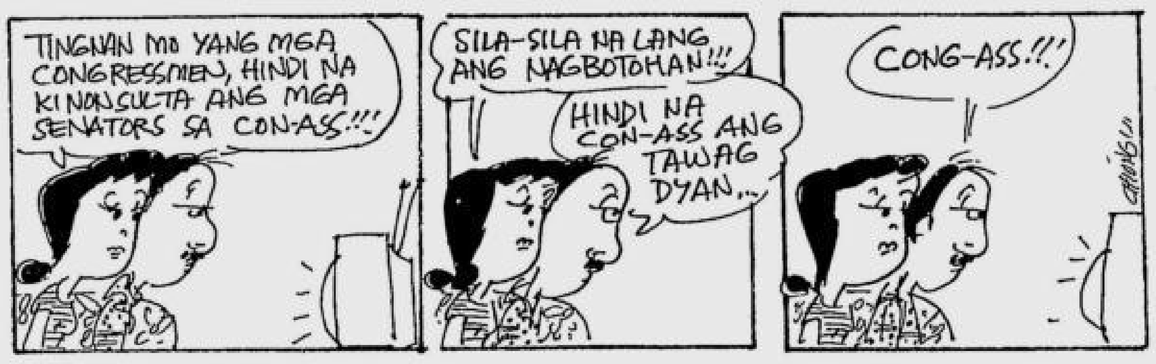
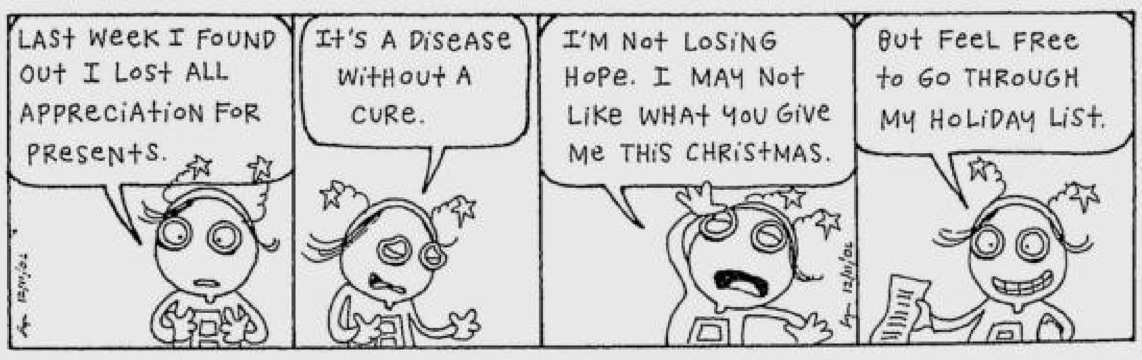
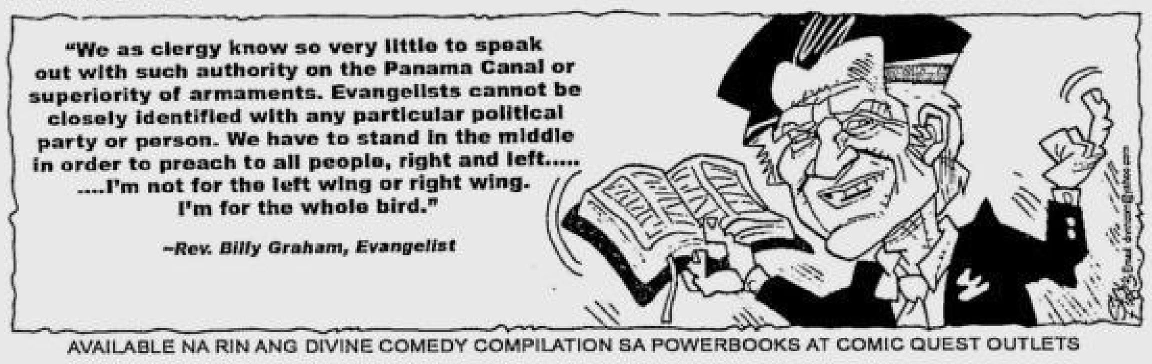
LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


TINGNAN MO YANG MGA CONGRESSMEN, HINDI NA KINONSULTA ANG MGA SENATORS SA CON-ASS!!!
SILA-SILA NA LANG ANG NAGBOTOHAN!!!
HINDI NA CON-ASS ANG TAWAG DYAN...
CONG-ASS!!!

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


LAST WEEK I FOUND OUT I LOST ALL APPRECIATION FOR PRESENTS.
IT'S A DISEASE WITHOUT A CURE.
I'M NOT LOSING HOPE. I MAY NOT LIKE WHAT YOU GIVE ME THIS CHRISTMAS.
BUT FEEL FREE TO GO THROUGH MY HOLIDAY LIST.

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


"We as clergy know so very little to speak out with such authority on the Panama Canal or superiority of armaments. Evangelists cannot be closely identified with any particular political party or person. We have to stand in the middle in order to preach to all people, right and left..... ....I'm not for the left wing or right wing. I'm for the whole bird."
–Rev. Billy Graham, Evangelist

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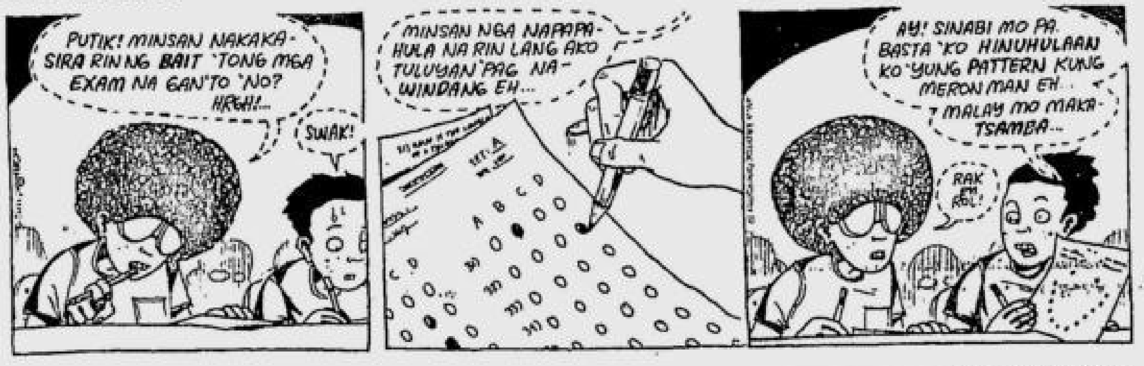
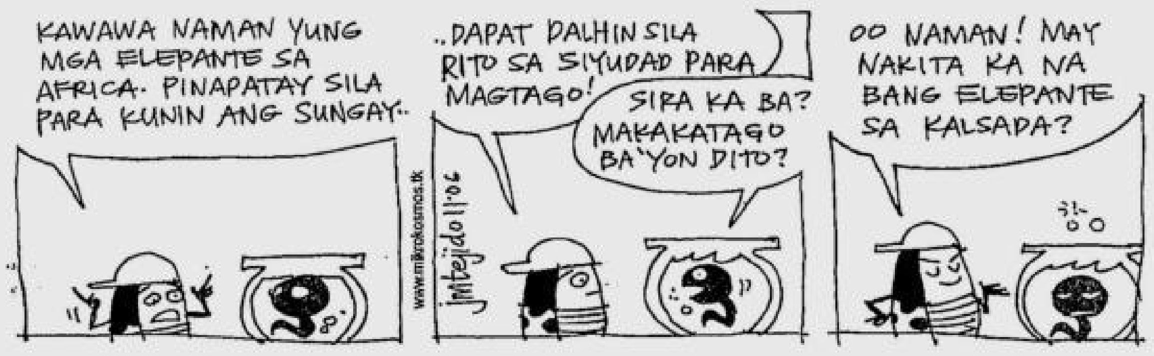

PUTIK! MINSAN NAKAKASIRA RIN NG BAIT 'TONG MGA EXAM NA GAN'TO 'NO? HRGH!...
SWAK!
MINSAN NGA NAPAPAHULA NA RIN LANG AKO TULUYAN 'PAG NAWINDANG EH...
AY! SINABI MO PA. BASTA 'KO HINUHULAAN KO 'YUNG PATTERN KUNG MERON MAN EH... MALAY MO MAKATSAMBA...
RAK EN ROL!

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


KAWAWA NAMAN YUNG MGA ELEPANTE SA AFRICA. PINAPATAY SILA PARA KUNIN ANG SUNGAY..
..DAPAT DALHIN SILA RITO SA SIYUDAD PARA MAGTAGO!
SIRA KA BA? MAKAKATAGO BA 'YON DITO?
OO NAMAN! MAY NAKITA KA NA BANG ELEPANTE SA KALSADA?
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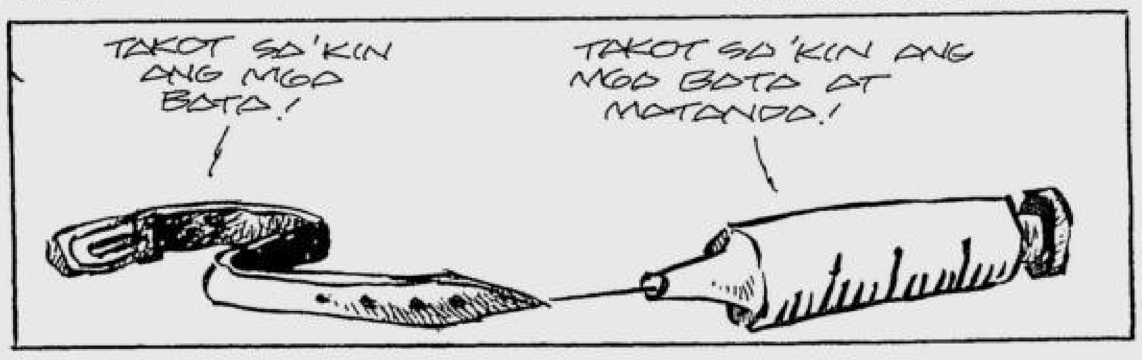
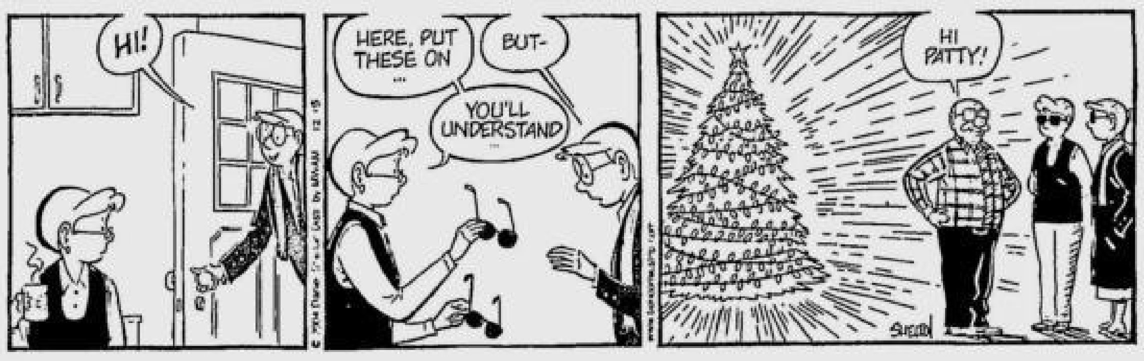
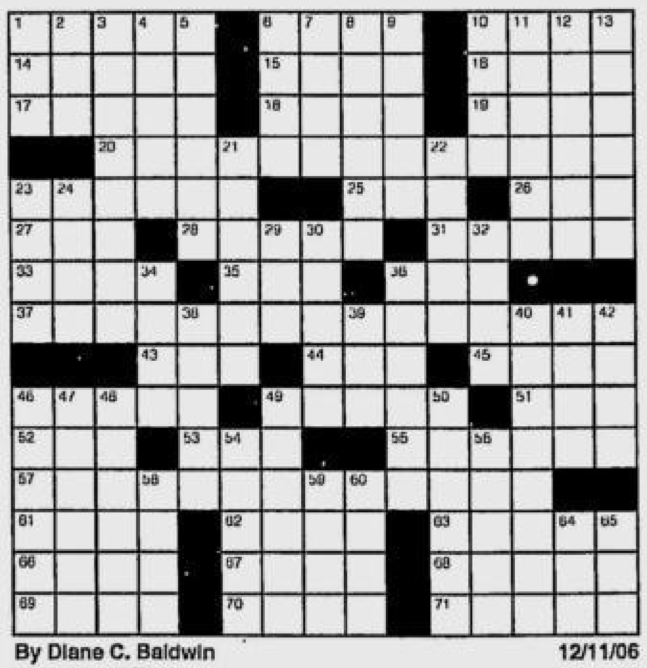

TAKOT SA'KIN ANG MGA BATA!
TAKOT SA'KIN ANG MGA BATA AT MATANDA!

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


HI!
HERE, PUT THESE ON ...
BUT-
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND ...
HI PATTY!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Diane C. Baldwin
Columbia, MD

12/11/06

ACROSS
1 Ritzy wheels
6 Shrewd
10 Word on a red sign
14 Fit to suit
15 Buckeye State
16 Horne or Olin
17 Not as vibrant
18 Impose, as a fine
19 Bakery job
20 Honestly!
23 Whirl around
25 Dos Passos trilogy
26 Altar vow
27 Regard with regret
28 Ice cream serving
31 Tidy up
33 Woe is me
35 Vessel with a spigot
36 To's companion
37 That's the truth!
43 Paul Bunyan's tool
44 Pester continuously
45 Apiece
46 In isolation
49 Madison Ave. fellow
51 Old French coin
52 Weep convulsively
53 Poke fun
55 Court judgment
57 Without fail!
61 E.T. vehicles
62 Tureen contents
63 Some square dances
66 Harvest
67 Driving force
68 Map within a map
69 Contrary current
70 Black, in verse
71 Ore analysis

DOWN
1 Indy circuit
2 Lupino of Hollywood
3 Abuse
4 Met production
5 Swaggers
6 Equine youngster
7 Pardon me, less politely
8 Throw in the towel
9 Toys with strings
10 Letter opener's mark
11 Computer geek
12 New York city
13 Local clergyman
21 Batten down
22 Mother-of-pearl
23 Snatch
24 Type of log
29 Eyeball
30 Upright, as hair
32 Zero at Wimbledon
34 Marquee name
36 Barber of Seville
38 Newsboy's shout
39 Fugitive's escape
40 Simplicity
41 Graphics image
42 Hoodlum
46 Guarantee
47 Fluffed out
48 Overseas
49 Soak up
50 Coypu fur
54 Put forth
56 Mortgage securities
58 Lay eyes on
59 Sci-fi award
60 __ for business
64 Pastoral spot
65 Barnyard pen

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

A	P	R	E	S	S	K	I	■	F	A	T	H	E	R
D	R	A	M	A	T	I	C	■	O	R	I	O	L	E
D	E	D	I	C	A	T	E	■	O	I	L	M	E	N
U	P	O	N	■	R	E	C	I	T	A	T	I	V	E
C	A	M	E	L	■	D	O	L	L	S	■	N	A	G
E	R	E	N	O	W	■	L	I	I	■	M	I	T	E
D	E	S	C	R	Y	■	D	A	G	■	O	D	E	S
■	■	■	I	D	O	L	■	C	H	A	N	■	■	■
A	C	M	E	■	M	A	P	■	T	R	E	A	D	S
T	H	I	S	■	I	R	E	■	S	U	T	U	R	E
H	A	S	■	A	N	G	E	R	■	M	A	R	I	A
E	N	D	A	N	G	E	R	E	D	■	R	E	F	T
A	G	O	U	T	I	■	E	M	A	C	I	A	T	E
R	E	N	N	E	T	■	S	I	N	I	S	T	E	R
T	S	E	T	S	E	■	S	T	E	A	M	E	R	S

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12/11/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're hardworking and purposeful. You need goals to strive for. Because you're intent on your purpose, others observe you. This gives you the power of influence over others. You willingly assume positions of responsibility. You will deliver whatever is asked of you. The year ahead will hold some major changes for you, perhaps a significant as in 1998.

Birthdate of: Ben Browder, actor; Gary Dourdan, actor; Grace Paley, writer/political activist.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You're ready to act on travel plans or matters connected with publishing, dealing with foreign countries, educational matters, medicine and the law. Nothing will hold you back!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You've decided to take the high road. It's good to be generous to others. What goes around comes around. (And you know this from experience.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Today you have an opportunity to show others that you can walk your talk. You feel confident and ready to stand up and be counted. You see that we are all in this Big Soup together.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Cooperation with coworkers springs up spontaneously today! Everyone is ready to jump on board no matter what you suggest. It's so easy to work with others today.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your sense of romance and playful fun is activated today. You feel creative and carefree. You know that you will never again be as young as you are today. (The gospel truth.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Any effort to improve your home or your family situation will be immediately rewarded. You can make great gains today. Don't be stingy with your time and effort.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Your effort to influence and persuade others is excellent today. Be confident of your communication skills. You're in the zone!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You have the Midas touch today. Trust your moneymaking ideas. However, you're also in the mood to make major purchases. Good luck.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is an excellent day for physical exercise. You feel energetic, positive and enthused. Basically, you want to do good. You want to be the best that you can be.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): It's easy to be selfless today. You enjoy helping others. It's not always this way, but today it is. (It's a good thing.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your networking skills are fabulous today. You're like the Pied Piper. Whatever you do or say completely influences others. (With great power comes great responsibility.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your ambition is aroused. Because of this, you will be able to influence others to do your bidding. You can make great strides today to promote your personal agenda, and certainly your reputation.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

6		3	8					
	8		2	4	6		7	
4							9	
2	3	5	4		9	7	6	
	4	8	6		3	9	5	1
	9							7
	6		5	8	7		2	
					4	5		3

Difficulty Level ★

12/11

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

3	7	1	2	8	9	5	6	4
2	8	6	4	7	5	3	1	9
4	5	9	1	6	3	8	2	7
6	4	5	9	2	1	7	8	3
9	1	2	8	3	7	4	5	6
8	3	7	5	4	6	1	9	2
5	6	8	7	9	4	2	3	1
1	9	4	3	5	2	6	7	8
7	2	3	6	1	8	9	4	5

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

12/10

Grisham sides with the 'Innocent'

By Ruel S. De Vera

BY 1996, MISSISSIPPI lawyer-turned-novelist John Grisham's name had grown synonymous with chart-topping legal thrillers even as he had already retired from legal practice. Yet Grisham surprised many by returning to the courtroom to successfully gain a verdict for his client, the family of a slain railroad worker.

He took similar risks with his books, moving away from the familiar courtroom conspiracies to the somewhat semi-autobiographical-and heavily literary—"A Painted House" in 2001.

While Grisham had hinted that he was tweaking his style even with legal thrillers (his "The King of Torts" was remarkably nimble and different from the tried-and-tested formula of "The Firm"), his other attempts to diversify (the soggy "Bleachers" and overcooked "The Broker") were not as effective or welcome.

Yet readers were surprised to find out that Grisham's newest book (and 19th overall) was not a work of fiction at all. "The Innocent Man" (Doubleday, New York 2006, 360 pages) is a book of nonfiction and a pretty good one.

"The Innocent Man" is a clever title because the book does not talk merely about one, but the unknown number of wrongfully convicted due to botched, misguided or simply malevolently inept trials. Grisham focused on one particular state and its spate of troubled cases. "Since 1990, Oklahoma has executed more convicts on a per capita basis than any other state," he writes. "No place, not even Texas, comes close."

The ghost of Truman Capote's "In Cold Blood" lingers over the book's Oklahoma setting, hovering in particular over Ada, where "Innocent" takes up the case of two men, Ron Williamson and Dennis Fritz, are sentenced to death for a controversial murder. How that comes to pass is chilling in its complexity, but also shocking in its ineptness. Biased investigators, prosecutors suffering from tunnel vision, bad lawyers, half-hearted decision and terrible prison conditions; they all add up.

Soon, Williamson and Fritz find themselves in hell both physical and legal. "Like all defendants, they were presumed to be innocent, but nonetheless kept in jail so they wouldn't flee or be loose on the streets to kill others," Grisham writes. It gets worse as the two find themselves on death row, slowly losing their humanity, for a crime they simply did not commit. And this goes on for 12 years.

The book alternates between slow burning setup and freakishly quick rushes to judgment. At several points, "Innocent" screeches to a complete halt when Grisham literally delivers an omnipresent explanation on how legally wrongheaded something is. It is helpful, yes, but also tends to make the long parts even longer.

Then "Innocent" takes a dramatic turn as, after years of futile appeals, the two find some legal luck and one good turn begets another. Tireless lawyers convinced of the men's innocence, loyal relatives and objective judges; they rebalance the scales.

All of this Grisham chronicles with aplomb and detail. Instead of the percussive plots of his courtroom dramas, he smartly slows time down, until the readers themselves can feel the glacial pace of life for the wrongfully convicted. He observes with legal insight as well as clear, crisp prose how men can be made and unmade by decisions of a few.

There are no convenient endings, no happily-ever-afters. There is a degree of redemption, but the scars never fade, even for the exonerated. These are real people, some of them broken, some healing, and not characters.

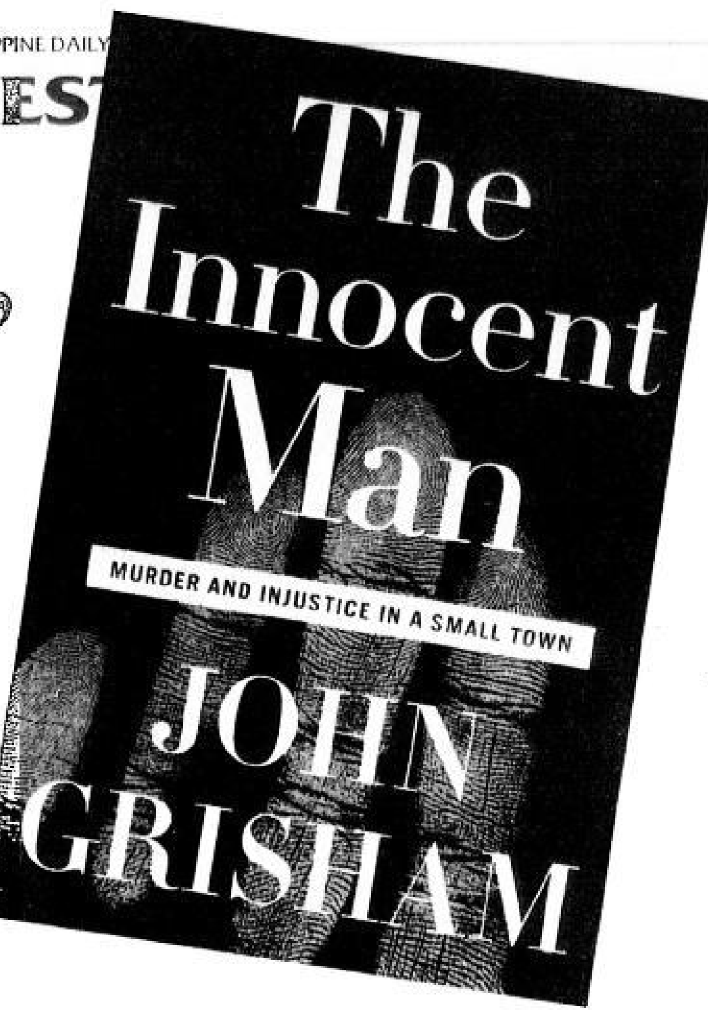
That's part of what makes "Innocent" so strong—it's a tale of lost souls, lost nights and lost lives, and the quest to save something, anything.

"Innocent" does not read like any other Grisham book. It boasts way much more straightforward exposition, reading very much like the world's most hyped true-crime tale. Furthermore, it just shows that real life really is stranger than fiction. Grisham could not have made this up.

That being said, this book represents the single most significant shift in Grisham's writing oeuvre. "The Firm" is his best novel, addictive and rocket-propelled in its improbable but irresistible way. "A Painted House" is his most personal, as well as his most accomplished piece of fiction.

While it is nothing like any of his other books, "The Innocent Man" is easily John Grisham's best book to date, a wonderful and powerful acquittal on many levels.

Available in hardcover from National Book. Store.



Life continues
to imitate fiction
as courtroom king
John Grisham
turns to nonfiction
for this riveting
tale of justice
gone awry

'The First Leon' musical

The Victory Christian Fellowship at Fort Bonifacio presents "The First Leon," a musical play.

Ever since he discovered that his name spelled backwards was Noel, Leon has felt called upon to tell the world the true meaning of Christmas. But when he tries out for every role in the annual pageant, he finds that he's the only one who doesn't get a part. Rejected, now Leon understands better than anyone how Mary and Joseph must have felt when they heard the words, "No room" that night in Bethlehem.

Without really trying to, however, Leon does uncover the true meaning of Christmas when he identifies the real star of Bethlehem.

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From book to film, 'Good Year' a good alternative

RUSSELL Crowe is Max Skinner, a London-based investment expert who moves to Provence to sell a small vineyard he has inherited from his late uncle.

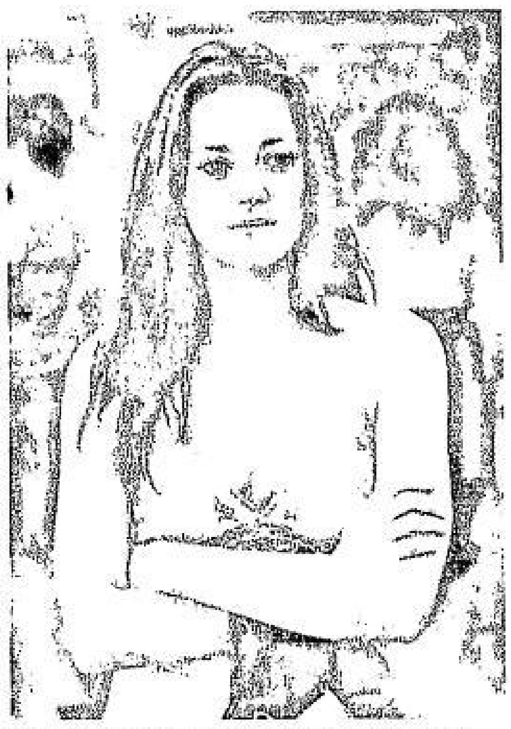
By Eldric Paul A. Peredo
Contributor

WHAT DO YOU DO IF AN alternative life of relative peace calls you from the fast-paced, cutthroat but moneyed world, say, of bonds brokering?

Filmmaker Ridley Scott takes a break from his usual offering of action, blood and gore even as he re-teams with "Gladiator" star Russell Crowe for 20th Century Fox's "A Good Year," a film about financial barracuda Max Skinner, whose teeth are filed against his will by a suspension for an unethical transaction and an offer of a more peaceful life.

Based on the novel of the same title by British author Peter Mayle, "A Good Year" makes for a laid-back movie with just enough story and actor pull to keep audiences until the finish.

Mayle, formerly of London's advertising industry, retired to and is now a full-time resident of Provence, and has since been churning out both fiction and nonfiction books detailing life on the French countryside. His books have been described as travelogues disguised as thrillers or dramas, particularizing as they do the local life, from the start of meals to the last drop of *vin de pays*, or the table wine.



FRENCH actress Marion Cotillard stars as Fanny Chenal, a café owner who catches the eye of Max Skinner.

Alternative

For sure, "A Good Year" is a relaxing alternative to the gritty fare in movie houses in the run-up to the December fests. In fact, we don't see much of movies of this slow pace these days, the trend being to shock and surprise as much as possible without causing myocardial infarctions. And if that isn't a relief, the movie is also, coincidentally, about red wine, known for its fostering heart health.

Crowe himself, like his character who is forced to take a break, must have enjoyed easing himself into the role of Skinner, a London financial go-getter who has just been informed of an inheritance—a vineyard chateau in France's rustic province of Provence.

Skinner's initial plan is to sell the property and take the money, which should keep him secure should the suspension lead to a possible layoff. He is immediately confronted by memories of his boyhood summers spent on the chateau, when he was taught the better things in life by his vineyard owner-uncle, Henry, played by legendary actor Albert Finney.

Then, the vineyard's longtime caretaker, Mr. Duflot, will do anything to keep his beloved vines from passing into unfamiliar and perhaps uncaring hands. Finally, there is the sultry café owner, Fanny Chenal, who distracts and mystifies Skinner enough to keep him on the property to discern his options.

This is where Scott realizes on film the flavors and scenery Mayle is known to paint vividly in his books. Indeed, the green in the film by itself can already soothe. Add to that an old stone house and the French lilt and you have a romantic atmosphere complemented by a livable pace and calming French songs on the soundtrack.

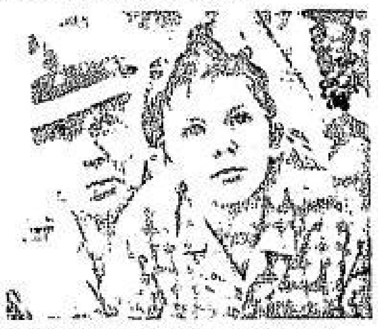
Joining Crowe and Finney are Marion Cotrillard (who debuted as Josephine in the Ewan McGregor starrer "The Big Fish") as Fanny; Australian actress Abbie Cornish as Max Skinner's cousin and Henry's illegitimate daughter Christie Roberts; and "Finding Neverland" and "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" star Freddie Highmore as the young Max.

Cornish is being heralded as Australia's next big acting talent, after receiving a standing ovation at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival for the sexy Aussie film, "Somersault."

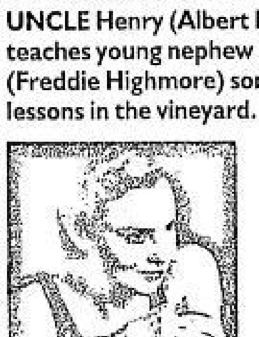
The arrival of Christie at the scene presents problems for Skinner, because under French law, she is a nearer relative who is more entitled to the inheritance even if she is illegitimate. But Skinner is determined to sell, bothered only by Fanny's challenging guardedness, a mysterious other vintage he finds in the wine cellar, and remembered lessons from Uncle Henry as well as memories of his childhood that unfold to the audience throughout the film.

Did we say "only"? Back at home, Skinner survives the corporate kick-out and is, in fact, offered a hefty pay raise.

The answer to the question we have postulated earlier, however, eventually boils down to which of the alternative lives ultimately satisfy the soul like a glass of good wine, one which a French winemaker might sip after a successful harvest while contemplating how good the year has been.



UNCLE Henry (Albert Finney) teaches young nephew Max (Freddie Highmore) some life lessons in the vineyard.



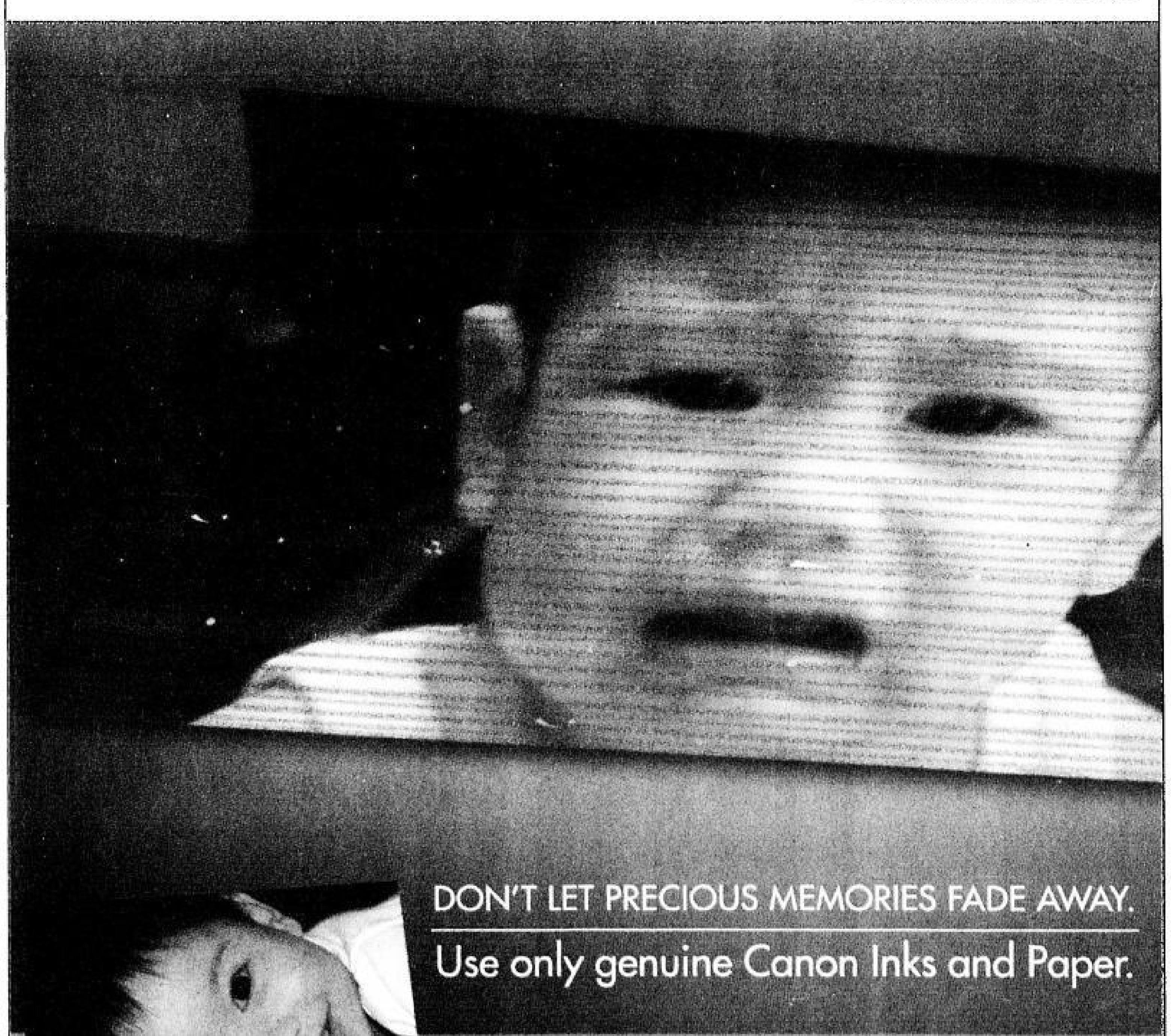
ABBIE Cornish as Christie Roberts

Rustica Carpio performs in China

A GROUP OF FIVE THEATER artists will leave on Dec. 12 for the People's Republic of China for the staging of "Candida," a one-act monologue based on and inspired by the full-length play "A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino" by National Artist Nick Joaquin.

Directed and performed by Rustica Carpio, multiawarded educator, performing artist of stage-film-television, writer and translator, this cultural event between the Philippine and Chinese governments will be presented in Beijing and Xiamen by China's Ministry of Culture, the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and the Philippine Embassy in Beijing, in association with Far Eastern University and the Cultural Planners Association of the Philippines which coordinated this cultural fare.

Aside from Carpio, the group is composed of artistic and production staff that include Zenas R. Lozada, chair/leader and in-charge of documentation; Lydia A. Palaypay, production supervisor and round table discussant; Kriztine R. Viray, lighting designer and sound/music director; and Gloria Asis-Mendoza, narrator and production assistant.



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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**
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JEFFREY RUSTIA RUDY ESPERAS

Broadcast designer gets Pamana award

By Armin Adina

FILIPINO-CANADIAN JEFFREY "JEFF" Rustia is well-known in several parts of the world. Ironically, no Philippine-based company has yet tapped this maverick wiz in broadcast design and branding.

Front, Rustia's Toronto-based company, was instrumental in creating and establishing a media character for Nickelodeon channel in the Philippines as well as in Malaysia, India and Hungary.

Rustia has also worked on campaigns for HBO and Georgian Public Broadcasting in the Republic of Georgia.

Surprised

For "exemplifying the talent, creativity, artistry and industry of the Filipino, Rustia received the Pamana ng Pilipino Award from Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang recently.

"I am surprised, and humbled [by the award]," Rustia told Inquirer Entertainment. "It has not totally sunk in. I can't believe I'm at this stage in my life where my country is recognizing what I do."

Although based in Canada, the Quezon City-born Rustia has always been proud of his roots. "Since I was a kid, my parents have been reminding me that I'm Filipino, and that I have to work hard and be the best," he said. "In short, I should be good, successful and smart."

While working on his honors degree in design at the University of Toronto, Jeff started the first Filipino-Canadian newspaper and Filipino youth theater group.

Playwright

He also founded the Filipino Youth Group in Canada whose aim is to instill in every Filipino in Canada pride for their heritage. At about this time, he wrote the play "Alaala," about young Filipinos who are not proud of who they are.

This patriotism spills over to his job. When Front was established in 1999, Rustia recalled, its first project was the Nickelodeon campaign in the Philippines. He made use he lent to his work a distinctive Pinoy touch, the better to introduce the chan-

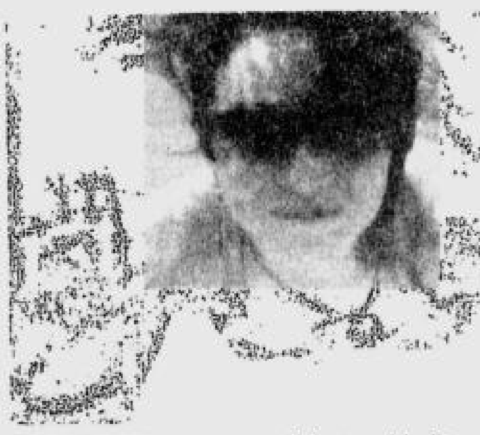
BROADCAST/ F2

High school hell in 'Pitong Dalagita'

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

AFTER EXPLORING SEXUAL issues in three previous gay-themed digital movies for adults, writer-director Cris Pablo's latest project "Pitong Dalagita" creatively delves into some teen-centric issues.

Pablo has always been adventurous; he's told winding, provocative stories before with "Duda," "Bathhouse" and "Bilog." But while the filmmaker is undoubtedly a very determined storyteller, several factors have made watching his films occasionally difficult—for instance, miscast actors, a barrage of unnecessary characters and even technical glitches like unforeseen sound and video aberrations. Such problems particularly apply to "Bathhouse" and "Bilog," so it's good to see some very noticeable improvements in "Pitong Dalagita."

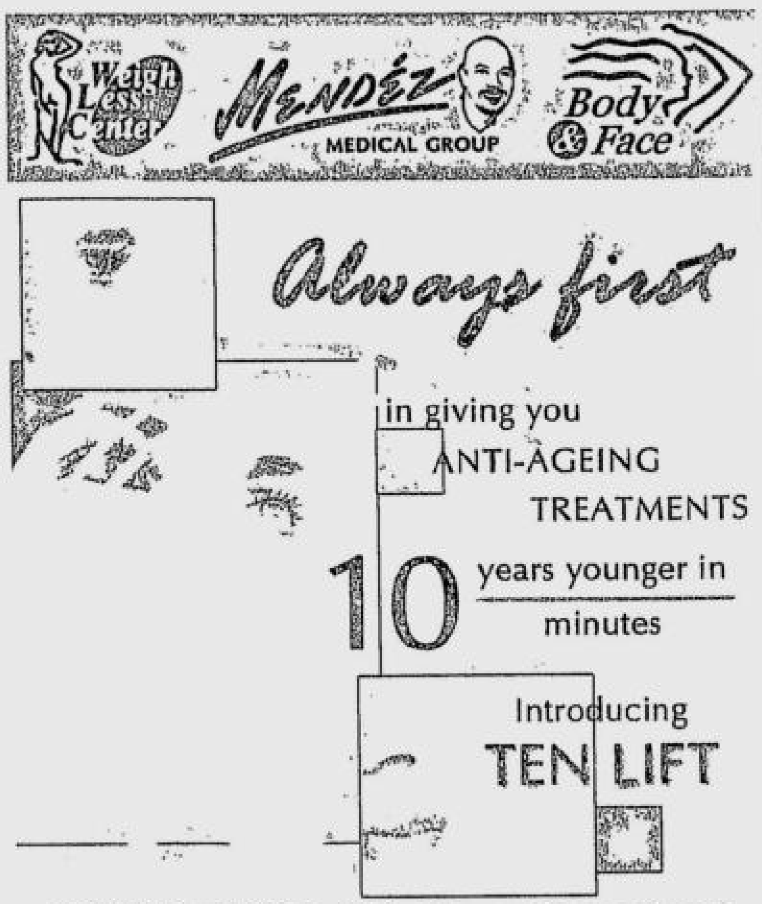


CRISTINE Reyes as one of the troubled teens

It's a simple story that's told in a non-linear manner, a technique that the auteur seems to favor, but "Dalagita" benefits from the editing. The multitude of perspectives pieces together a particular puzzle: Why did seven public high school students—six girls and a boy—slash their wrists? The guidance counselor, Ruli (Archie De Calma), investigates and becomes the audience's guide to figuring out this bizarre suicide pact. Interconnecting flashbacks, recalled by the surviving students, slowly add up to tell the truth and, as the cliché goes, the bigger picture.

That's told cleverly, although those unfamiliar with the actresses can mistake one for the other (some of them dress and almost look alike). But that initial confusion aside, it's easy

HIGH/ F2



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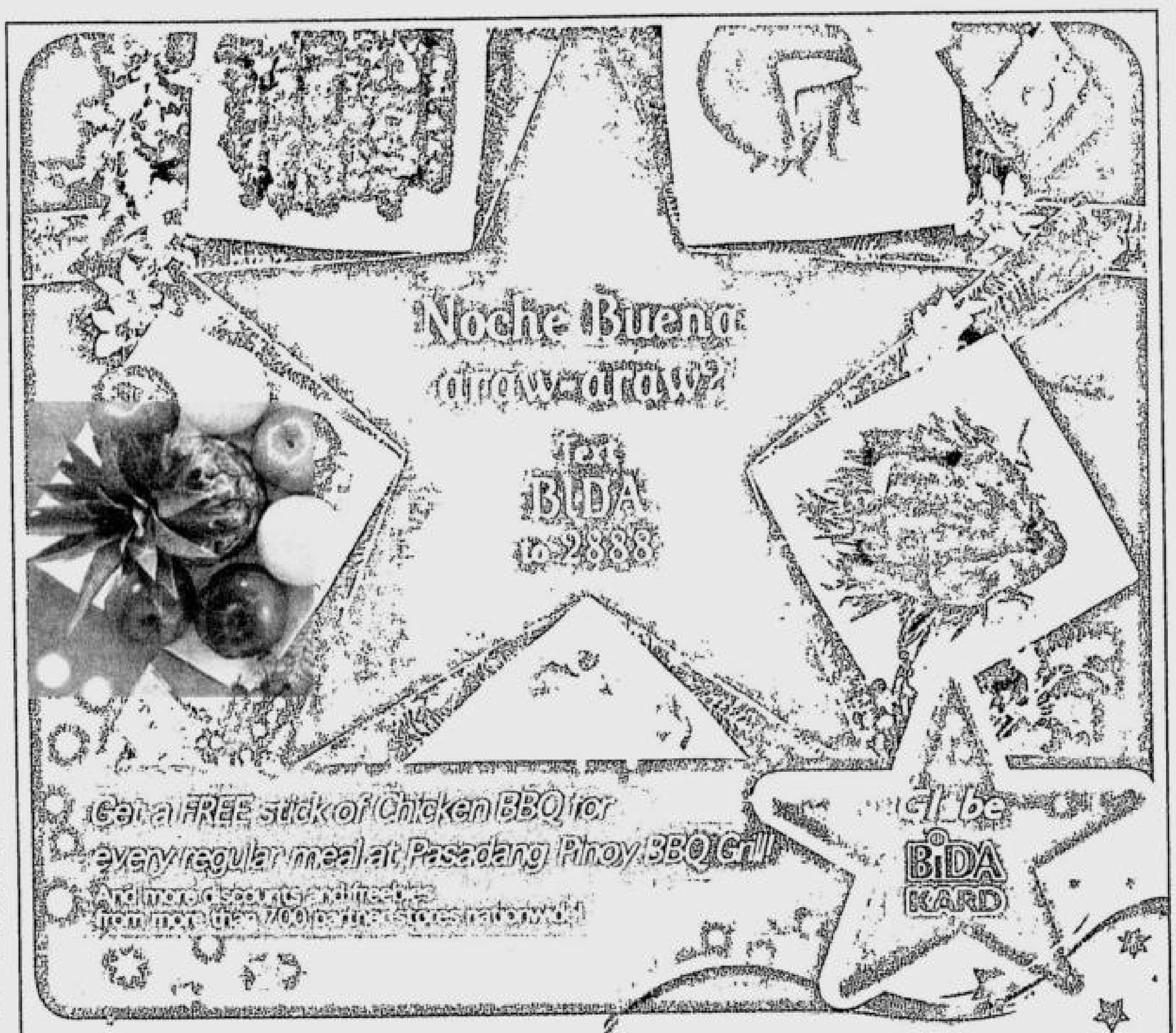
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By the year 2002, Sugarhouse Greenhills had been established. A year after Glorietta 3 branch was opened and Shangri-la was added to the list by 2004. New developments such as the welcoming of the franchising idea gave birth to Sugahouse Mall of Asia just recently. Moreover an opportunity to widen its horizon came up as Ayala opened its doors to Dela Rosa Carpark - the most recent addition. To date, another franchise opportunity for Casino Filipino is on its way proving Sugarhouse of its increasing popularity with gourmét afficionados.

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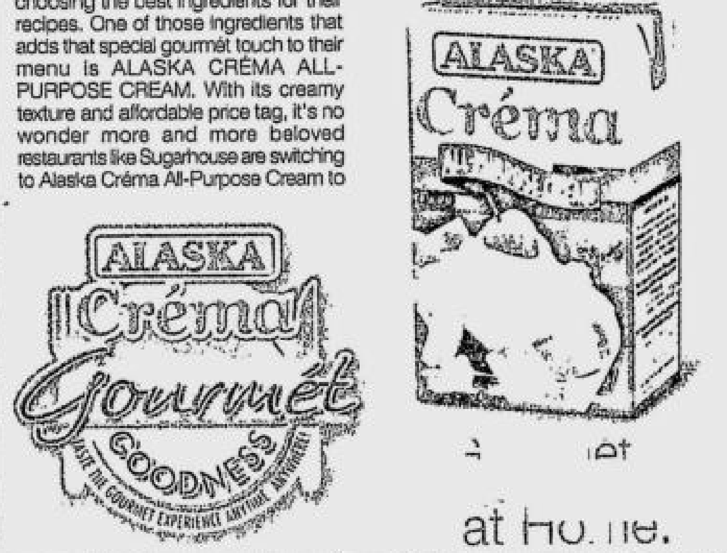
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1 1/4	cup	ALASKA FRESH MILK
1	pack	ALASKA CRÉMA ALL-PURPOSE CREAM
1/2	tsp	vanilla flavor
1 1/2	cups	strawberry preserved
1	loaf	jelly roll or sponge cake
3	tbsp	rum or brandy
1	cup	peaches, sliced
1	cup	pears, sliced
3/4	cup	almonds, sliced

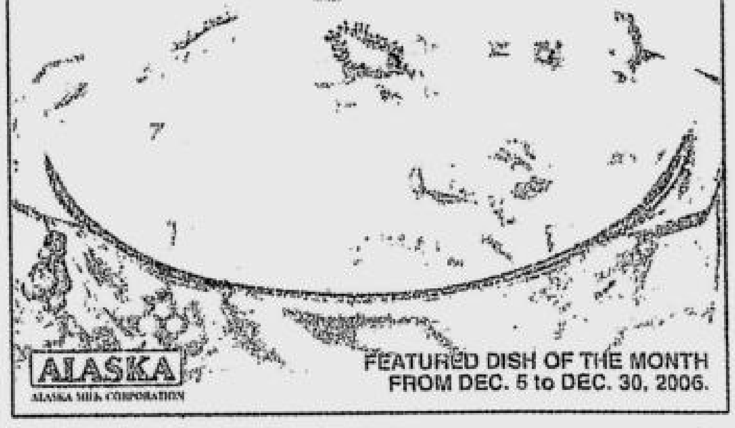
PROCEDURE :

1. Combine Alaska Fresh Milk and ALASKA CREMA ALL-PURPOSE CREAM in a saucepan. Heat and bring almost to a boil.
2. Beat egg yolks and sugar until thick and light colored.
3. Pour a little of hot milk and ALASKA CREMA ALL-PURPOSE CREAM mixture into the yolks. Remove cream mixture from heat and mix in egg yolk mixture.
4. Cook again until thick. Cool and add vanilla flavor.

TO ASSEMBLE:

1. Spread strawberry preserved on a jelly roll or sliced sponge cake. Sprinkle with rum or brandy.
2. Line a glass bowl with the slices. Spread a thick layer of custard and add sliced peaches & pears.
3. Continue layering until the top of the bowl.
4. Top with whipped ALASKA CREMA ALL-PURPOSE CREAM. Decorate with more fruit and sliced almonds. Chill for two hours.

Makes 6 servings.



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Camp Kilpatrick is considered home to hopeless juvenile delinquents before they incarcerate to the California Youth Authority.

Probation officer Sean Porter (Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson), a top football player back in his high school days, is finding ways to put direction to the lives of these youngsters. Together with fellow officer Malcolm Moore (Xzibit), Porter starts his mission by forming a football team: the Camp Kilpatrick Mustangs.

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Matinee Fee- P200 Primetime Fee- P250
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10:30AM 2:15PM 3:30PM
Admission Price P200
1 CASINO ROYALE
2 GRIDIRON GANG
3 A GOOD YEAR
4 THE NATIVITY
5 DECK THE HALLS
6 REYNA

PREMIERE CINEMA
HAPPY FEET

DIRECTOR'S CLUB
RESERVED

PODIUM
CINEMA 1
THE NATIVITY
CINEMA 2
A GOOD YEAR
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 HAPPY FEET
2 THE RETURN
3 WAG KANG LILINGON
4 CASINO ROYALE
5 INANG YAYA
6 A GOOD YEAR
7 HAPPY FEET
8 RESERVED
9 REYNA
10 DECK THE HALLS
11 THE NATIVITY
12 CASINO ROYALE

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 HAPPY FEET
2 INANG YAYA
3 CASINO ROYALE
4 RESERVED
5 THE RETURN
6 FRAGILE
7 REYNA
8 WAG KANG LILINGON
9 RESERVED
10 HAPPY FEET
11 A GOOD YEAR
12 THANK YOU FOR SMOKING

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 A GOOD YEAR
2 FRAGILE
3 WAG KANG LILINGON
4 ZU WARRIORS
5 REYNA
6 CASINO ROYALE
7 HAPPY FEET
8 INANG YAYA
9 THE RETURN
10 GIGIL
11 AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
12 THE NATIVITY

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 CASINO ROYALE
2 REYNA
3 HAPPY FEET
4 THE NATIVITY
5 WAG KANG LILINGON
6 DECK THE HALLS
7 A GOOD YEAR
8 THE RETURN
9 REYNA
10 FRAGILE

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 HAPPY FEET
2 THE NATIVITY
3 A GOOD YEAR
4 REYNA
5 WAG KANG LILINGON
6 INANG YAYA

SM CITY SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 THE NATIVITY
2 CASINO ROYALE
3 MEE-SHEE
4 HAPPY FEET
5 REYNA
6 INANG YAYA
7 A GOOD YEAR
8 WAG KANG LILINGON
9 THE RETURN

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 THE NATIVITY
2 REYNA
3 INANG YAYA
4 HAPPY FEET

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
2 THE RETURN
3 THE NATIVITY
4 FRAGILE
5 HAPPY FEET
6 CASINO ROYALE
7 REYNA
8 GIGIL
9 PITONG DALAGITA
10 A GOOD YEAR
11 WAG KANG LILINGON
12 INANG YAYA

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 HAPPY FEET
2 REYNA
3 BOA
4 DECK THE HALLS

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 HAPPY FEET
2 THE RETURN
3 DECK THE HALLS
4 REYNA

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 THE NATIVITY
2 INANG YAYA
3 HAPPY FEET
4 REYNA

movietime

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a good year

Russell Crowe is Max Skinner, a successful investment banker, who moves to his home town to sell a small vineyard he inherited from his late uncle.

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Directed by Ridley Scott

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MTRCB Rating: PG-13

SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868
1 REYNA
2 A GOOD YEAR
3 FRAGILE
4 CASINO ROYALE
5 HAPPY FEET
6 WAG KANG LILINGON
7 INANG YAYA
8 THE NATIVITY

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 HAPPY FEET
2 CASINO ROYALE
3 FRAGILE
4 WAG KANG LILINGON
5 REYNA
6 PITONG DALAGITA

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 HAPPY FEET
2 WAG KANG LILINGON
REYNA
INANG YAYA

LUZON

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS
2 SANTA CLAUSE 3
3 ANG PAMANA
4 FRAGILE

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 CASINO ROYALE
2 REYNA
3 ZU WARRIORS
4 ANG PAMANA
5 INANG YAYA
6 FRAGILE

SM CIY LIPA (043) 756-7925
1 CASINO ROYALE
2 REYNA
3 FEAST
4 ANG PAMANA

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 THE PRESTIGE
2 HAPPY FEET
3 WAG KANG LILINGON
4 SANTA CLAUSE 3

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 REYNA
2 FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS
3 HAPPY FEET
4 THE MARINE

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 HAPPY FEET
2 INANG YAYA
3 THE RETURN
4 REYNA

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5341265-66
1 HAPPY FEET
2 THE MARINE
3 ANG PAMANA
4 REYNA

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
RESERVED
FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS
THE MARINE
THE NATIVITY
WAG KANG LILINGON
REYNA
HAPPY FEET
CASINO ROYALE

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 REYNA
2 RESERVED
3 HAPPY FEET
4 SANTA CLAUSE 3
5 THE NATIVITY
6 CASINO ROYALE
7 RESERVED
8 ANG PAMANA

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 CASINO ROYALE
2 ANG PAMANA
3 REYNA
4 INANG YAYA
5 HAPPY FEET
6 THE NATIVITY

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 THE NATIVITY
2 HAPPY FEET
3 SANTA CLAUSE 3
4 CASINO ROYALE

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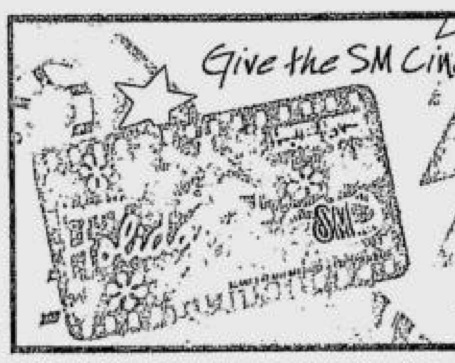

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GALLERIA 632-9116

1 CASINO ROYALE • THX
1:00 4:00 7:00 10.00

2 HAPPY FEET
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

3 KAMA SUTRA 3
12.00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

4 THE NATIVITY STORY
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

5 A GOOD YEAR
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

6 Reserved for VICTORY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

7 REYNA
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

8 BORAT
1:30 3:35 5:40 7:45 9:50

9 DECK THE HALLS
1:30 3:35 5:40 7:45 9:50

10 THE RETURN
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 THE NATIVITY STORY
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

2 A GOOD YEAR
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

3 HAPPY FEET
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

4 CASINO ROYALE
11:00 1:40 4:20 7:00 9:50

5 THE RETURN
10:10 12:35 2:50 5:05 7:25 9:50

6 REYNA
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

7 A GOOD YEAR
10:10 12:10 2:10 4:10 6:10 8:10 10:00

METRO EAST 682-8193 - 682-8197

1 THE RETURN
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

2 HAPPY FEET
11.05 1:35 4:05 6:35 9:05

3 A GOOD YEAR
1:05 3:45 6:25 9:05

4 THE NATIVITY STORY
11:30 1:55 4:20 6:45 9:10

5 FRAGILE
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

6 KAMA SUTRA 3
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

7 CASINO ROYALE
12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00

8 REYNA
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 KAMA SUTRA 3
2 A GOOD YEAR
3 REYNA
4 HAPPY FEET

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 REYNA
2 INANG YAYA
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 THE NATIVITY STORY
2 HAPPY FEET
3 REYNA
4 A GOOD YEAR

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STA. ROSA (049) 837-0907

1 THE MARINE
2 ANG PAMANA:THE INHERITANCE
3 REYNA
4 HAPPY FEET

LIPA (043) 757-3864 (043) 312-5870

1 FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS
2 FEAST
3 BORAT
4 REYNA

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 DECK THE HALLS
2 ANG PAMANA:THE INHERITANCE
3 REYNA
4 HAPPY FEET

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 FRAGILE
2 KALELDO
3 REYNA
4 BORAT

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 HAPPY FEET
2 A GOOD YEAR
3 CASINO ROYALE
4 REYNA

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 861-5270

1 HAPPY FEET
2 KALELDO
3 REYNA
4 BORAT
5 SANTA CLAUSE 3
6 FRAGILE

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459

1 HAPPY FEET
2 EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH
3 CASINO ROYALE
4 ANG PAMANA:THE INHERITANCE
5 REYNA
6 BOA

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 SANTA CLAUSE 3
2 THE NATIVITY STORY
3 HAPPY FEET
4 REYNA

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High schoo

From page F1

to get lured into the seeming convoluted tapestries. What w have is a group of deeply confuse and depressed teens who, unfortunately and almost unbelievabl succumb to an unhealthy combination of heartbreak and pee pressure—on the same night! A weird case of synchronicity.

The "Dalagita" characters are a truthful cross-section, however. And lumped together as an eclectic *barkada*, they exhibit different levels of working rapport. Growing up is addressed differently with each, too: There's Tina (Valerie Concepcion), who's smitten with Cris (Jay-R Trinidad), the shy gay guy who's pining for another classmate. There's street-smart Mayo (Yasmien Kurdi), who tries to survive squalid living conditions without the help of her drunk-druggie parents. The dense but attractive girl, Tisha (Iwa Moto), is harassed by insensitive and horny schoolmates.

Romie (Cristine Reyes) is an overly ambitious celebrity wannabe. Kissy (Nadine Samonte) carries the burden of deciding whether or not to pull the plug on her long-comatose mother. Binding the problematic pack is Joyce (Angelica Panganiban), a perky orphan who just wants to belong. Given this disparity, the story is given its layers and balance. The collective cry for help and search for validation are represented with clarity, and even the guidance counselor learns from their ordeals.

Again, "Pitong Dalagita" is simple, but Pablo's narrative skills are more fine-tuned and honed, choosing this time to leave some things to the imagination (given the PG rating, he had to). The musical score feels terribly foreboding and lacking in subtlety on occasion, though, making some scenes a little wonky, but the images are mostly well-composed. A rooftop conversation between Ruli and Cris, for instance, depicts the gritty architectural clutter of a humble neighborhood, while towering, sophisticated buildings loom in the background. Pablo inserts quiet little details into the movie, and while the finished product is far from perfect, "Pitong Dalagita" manages to address a big part of its characters' melancholia.

Broadcast designer gets…

From page F1

nel to young Filipinos.

Projects from other countries started coming. It helped that Rustia's pool is multi-racial in composition. This way, Front is able to always provide a local flavor to every project. His staff of about 20 people has Asians, Europeans and Americans. "You name it, we have it!" said Jeff.

Front has come a long way. Back in 1999, it was housed in a room with only one editing machine. Now the company has its own four-level building with four editing suites, plus 2D and 3D animation stations.

Rustia dreams of setting up an extension office in the Philippines to maximize what he believes is the country's strategic location. He said it could become his base of operations in Asia.

Repackage RP

Another dream is to help repackage the Philippines as a tourist destination by giving it a fresh image for the global market.

"A well-branded country will attract tourism, revenues and investments," said Rustia.

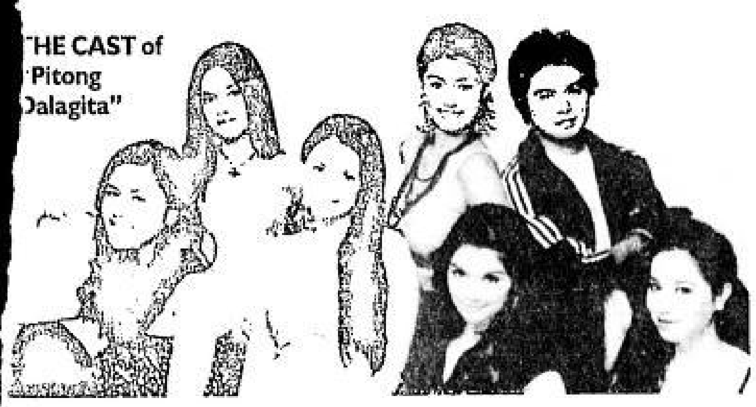
He noted that Hong Kong, Switzerland and Sweden had successfully marketed their countries by treating them as brands and even commissioning advertising companies to establish and/or enhance image.

"The Philippines itself does not need work because it has so much to offer—the people, the culture and natural resources," Rustia pointed out. "It just needs to be well-branded."

A globally competitive marketing campaign for the Philippines, Jeff shared, should "take the best in the Philippines—the smiles, the scenes, the culture and art."

Jeff continued: "The world should see the Philippines for the glory of what it has."

ell in 'Pitong Dalagita'

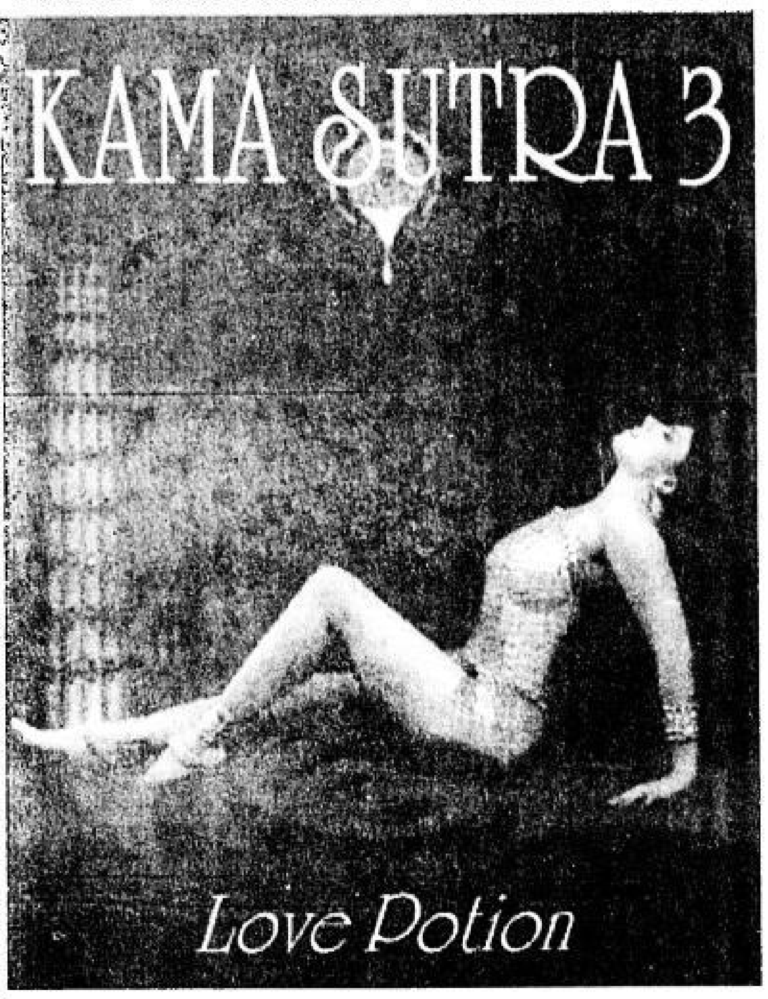


HE CAST of
Pitong
Dalagita"

MTRCB ▶ R-18 | Strictly for ADULTS
No one below 18 yrs. old may be admitted

NOW SHOWING

DISCOVER THE SECRETS
FROM THE ANCIENT BOOK OF LOVE



SHANG CINEPLEX

① A GOOD YEAR
MTRCB PG-13
1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00

② THE NATIVITY
MTRCB GP
12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00

③ HAPPY FEET
MTRCB GP
12:05, 2:30, 6:00, 7:30, 10:00

④ CASINO ROYALE
MTRCB PG-13
12:55, 4:00, 7:05, 10:10

PREMIERE THEATRE
RIDING ALONE FOR THOUSANDS OF MILES
MTRCB GP

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1	A GOOD YEAR 2:55, 5:40, 8:25, 11:00 PG-13
2	HAPPY FEET 1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00 G
3	CASINO ROYAL 1:10, 4:20, 7:30, 10:40 PG-13
4	THE NATIVITY 1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00 G

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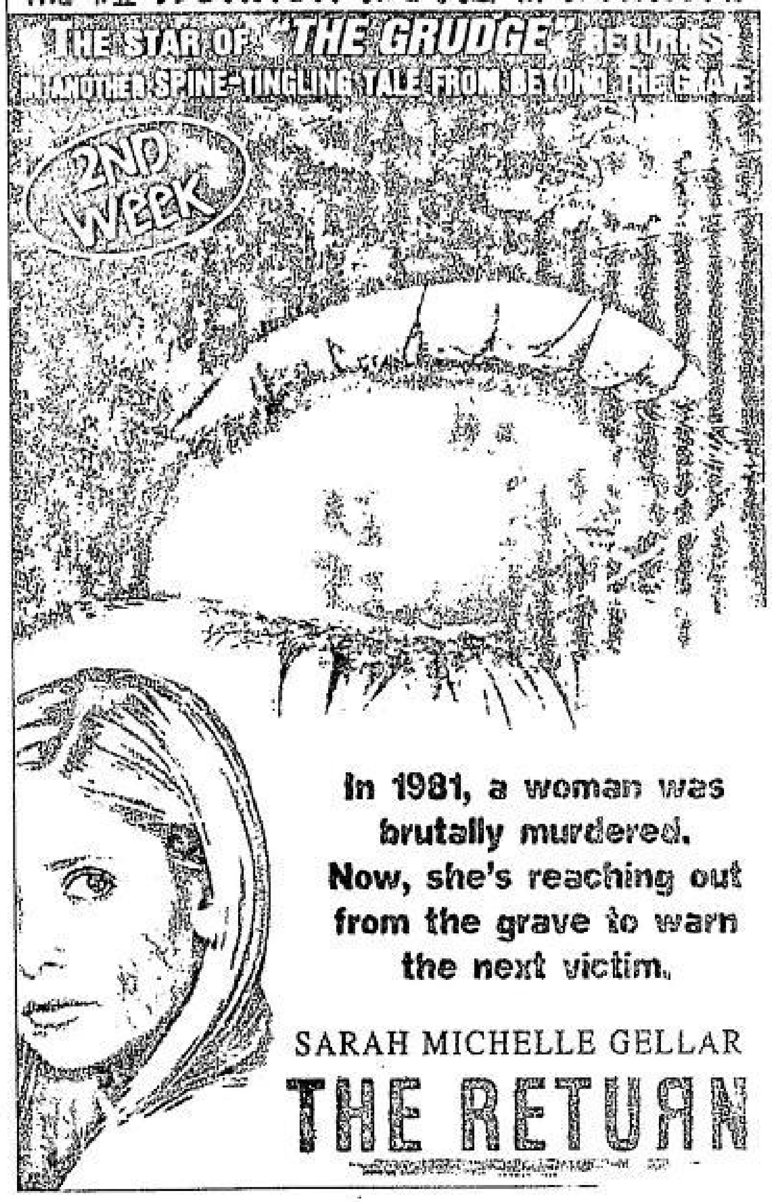
THE STAR OF "THE GRUDGE" RETURNS
IN ANOTHER SPINE-TINGLING TALE FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE



In 1981, a woman was brutally murdered. Now, she's reaching out from the grave to warn the next victim.

SARAH MICHELLE GELLAR

THE RETURN

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THX

G1 GLORIETTA I	1 REYNA	2 THE NATIVITY	3 HAPPY FEET	4 INANG YAYA	
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 THE NATIVITY	2 BORAT	3 THX CASINO ROYALE 1:30, 4:30, 7:30 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	4 A GOOD YEAR	5 THE RETURN	6 HAPPY FEET	7 ALL THE KING'S MEN	
GB1	1 HAPPY FEET	2 THE NATIVITY			
GB3	1 THX A GOOD YEAR 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX HAPPY FEET 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30 GUARANTEED SEATS			
	3 CASINO ROYALE 1:50, 4:40, 7:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 ALL THE KING'S MEN 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 THE NATIVITY 1:15, 3:20, 5:25, 7:30 GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC	1 THX THE NATIVITY GUARANTEED SEATS	2 A GOOD YEAR			
	3 HAPPY FEET	4 DECK THE HALLS	5 CASINO ROYALE		
ACC	1 THE NATIVITY	2 HAPPY FEET	3 THE MARINE	4 REYNA	
M2	1 REYNA	2 THE NATIVITY			
	3 A GOOD YEAR	4 HAPPY FEET	5 INANG YAYA		

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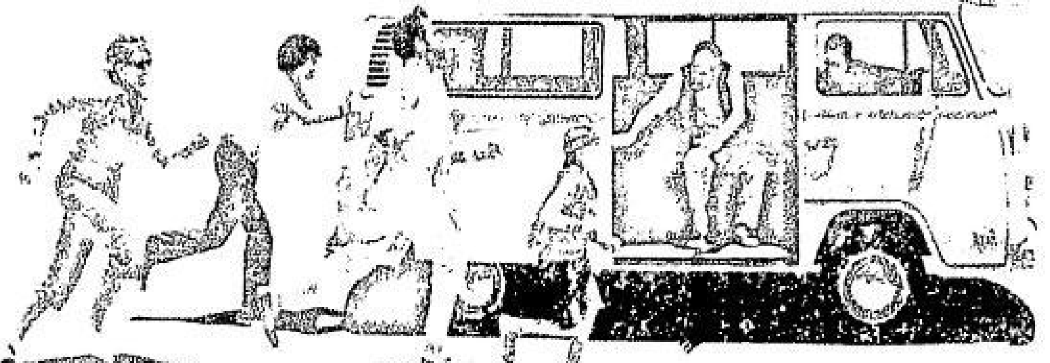

everyone pretend to be normal

GREG KINNEAR STEVE CARELL TONI COLLETTE PAUL DANO with ABIGAIL BRESLIN and ALAN ARKIN

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AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Christmas Carols w/ One World String Orchestra December 16, 2006	Christmas Goodies Bazaar December 11 to 15, 2006

GREENBELT	Holiday Harmonies with the Philippine Madrigal Singers December 2, 9 & 23, 2006
Greenbelt Onstage	Repertory Philippines presents SOUND OF MUSIC at REP's Globe Theater - November 11 to December 17, 2006 For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710
Ayala MUSEUM	Watch RILES: LIFE ON THE TRACKS. A documentary by acclaimed Filipino director Ditsi Carolino December 15, 2006 / 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

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ROUNDUP

Film fest mall tours

The Metro Manila Film Festival Philippines mall tours feature live entertainment and the chance for movie fans to meet and greet their favorite stars.

The mall caravan goes to SM Bacoor and SM San Lazaro on Dec. 15 and SM Valenzuela and Ayala Center Cebu on Dec. 16.

The nine entries to the film fest are "Shake, Rattle and Roll," "Mano Po 5," "Zsa Zsa Zaturnah," "Tatlong Baraha," "Enteng Kabisote: The Legend Goes On and On," "Matakot Ka Sa Karma," "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo," "Ligalig" and "Super Noypi."

'Mission Impossible' video

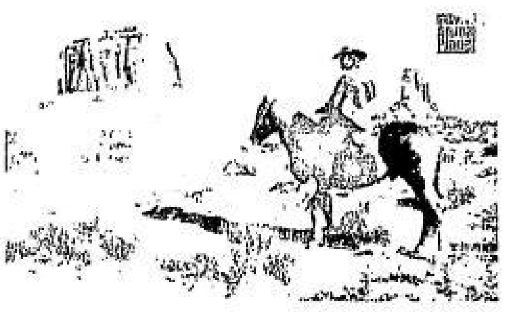
Tom Cruise returns as super-spy Ethan Hunt in the video release of "Mission Impossible 3."

Ethan Hunt is called back into action to confront the toughest villain he's ever faced—Owen Davian (Philip Seymour Hoffman), an international weapons and information provider.

'Wild and the West'

Animal Planet presents the premiere of "The Wild and the West," a behind-the-scenes look at the wild plants and animals that have been immortalized by Western sagas for decades.

The show premieres on Dec. 17, 9 p.m. and encores the following day at 11 p.m.



Classy and sassy filmmaking team

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

DIRECTOR RIDLEY SCOTT AND MALE LEAD **Russell Crowe** work well together in "A Good Year." The classy and yet sassy director-actor team tell the story of a financial "shark" whose high-flying career is "momentarily" interrupted by the death of his beloved uncle.

Crowe's character takes a few days off to fly to his uncle's vineyard and chateau in France, with the sole purpose of selling the property, and then resuming his life as a cold-blooded stock market wiz in London.

Unexpectedly, however, his return to the place where he spent the happiest years of his childhood with his uncle effects a change in the movie's protagonist's view of life. He remembers how much he loved his uncle, who taught him important lessons about living and loving.

Alas, his dazzling success in the financial world has caused our anti-hero to forget those lessons.

But, now that he's back at his uncle's vineyard, bittersweet memories come back in a flood—a torrent that washes away the hurts and defenses of the past, and leaves him vulnerable to the possibilities of life and love all over again.

In fact, he does encounter two young women who affect him in different ways—a restaurant owner whom he falls in love with, despite his fear of commitment, and an American girl who claims to be his uncle's illegitimate daughter.

Both young women continue the process of wearing down Crowe's defenses—until he finally decides to give his career a rest—and his heart the care and feeding it's been needing all these years.

The film's plotting is a bit on the predictable ride, but Crowe's textured and vital persona fills the screen agreeably enough.

And the film's impact is aided by its captivating French locales, which sometimes look as beautiful and evanescent as an Impressionist painting.

On the debit side, the movie's French character actors' efforts to gruff and gritty come off as rather obvious strained. And the film's thematic li ing of life and the winemaking p cess eventually comes off as mo than a tad tendentious.

So, "A Good Year" may not be of consistently savory vintage. But w liked the film for its pl points—Crowe's commanding po trayal, director Scott's exuberan touches, the lovely French country side, **Terrence Stamp**'s flashback per formance as the uncle who remains a vital and beloved presence even after death, etc.

A good enough mix of plus points, we'd say.

'Sa Ilalim ng Cogon'

Rico Maria Ilarde's "Sa Ilalim ng Cogon" is showing exclusively at Robinsons Galeria Indiesine Cinema B starting Dec. 13. The critically acclaimed film, which has earned plaudits abroad, is a mystery horror thriller that tells the story of a former soldier, Sam (**Yul Servo**) and his search for his missing former wife. In the process, he gets embroiled in a violent heist that ends in a deadly double-cross. The film also stars **Julia Clarete** as Katia.

"Sa Ilalim ng Cogon" has been hailed by critic Olaf Moller as a "masterpiece" while **Chris Chang**, senior editor of film comment magazine, describes the production as "impressive" and "truly poetic."

'An Inconvenient Truth'

SM Cinema is exclusively screening the controversial documentary "An Incovenient Truth," a powerful and must-see production about one of the day's most important issues, global warming.

Presented by former US vice president **Al Gore**, it brings home the persuasive argument that we can no longer afford to view global warming as a political issue but as a moral challenge.

Screening schedule: Dec. 13-19 at SM City Sta. Mesa and SM City San Lazaro; and Dec. 20-24, SM City Cebu and SM City Clark. Group ticket purchases are entitled to discounts.

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CINEMA 4 CASINO ROYALE
12:10, 3:20, 6:30
9:40
PG13

CINEMA 5 HAPPY FEET
11:00, 1:15, 3:35,
5:55, 8:15, 10:35
GP

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

DEC 11, 2006	Apo Hiking Society	8:30 PM
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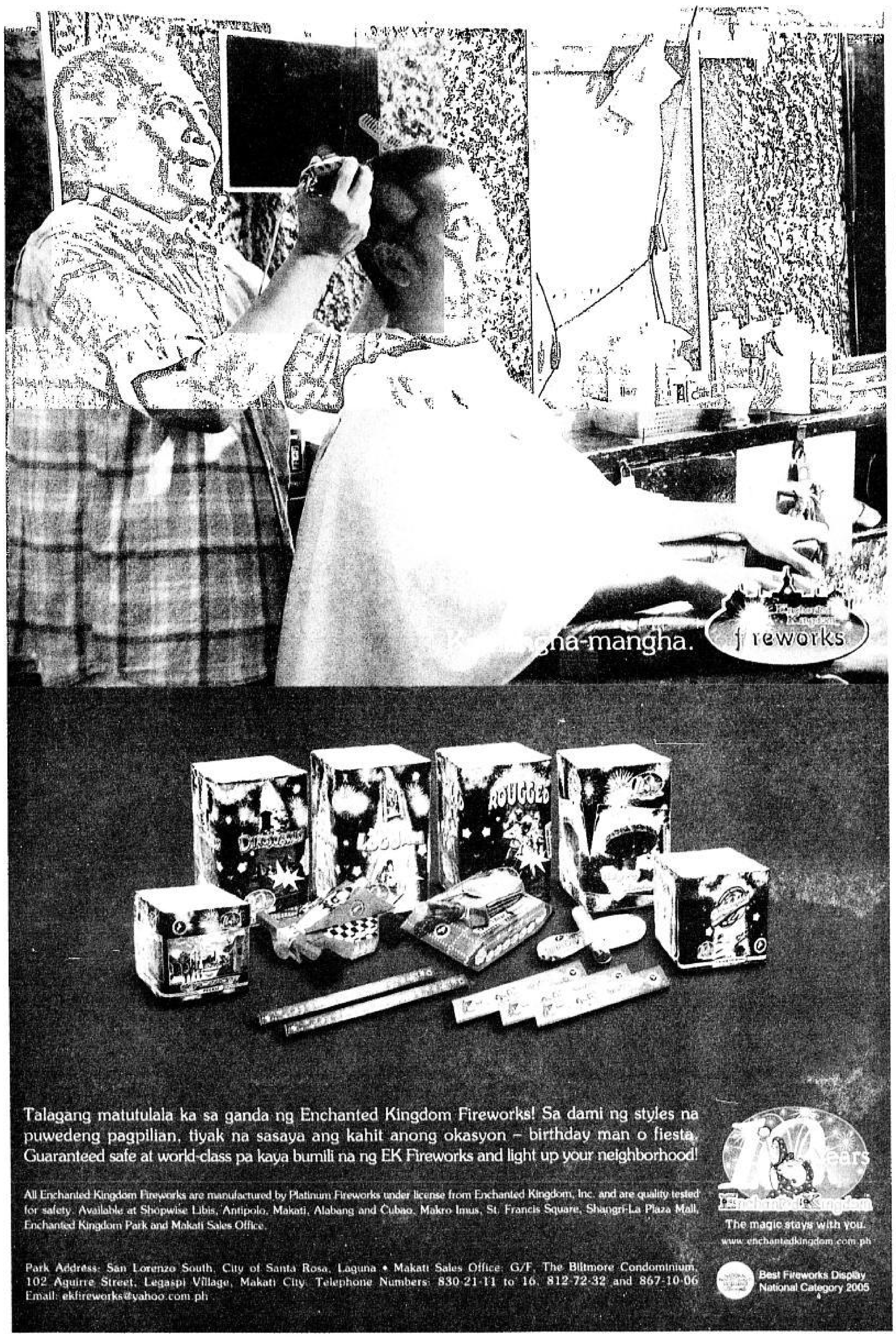

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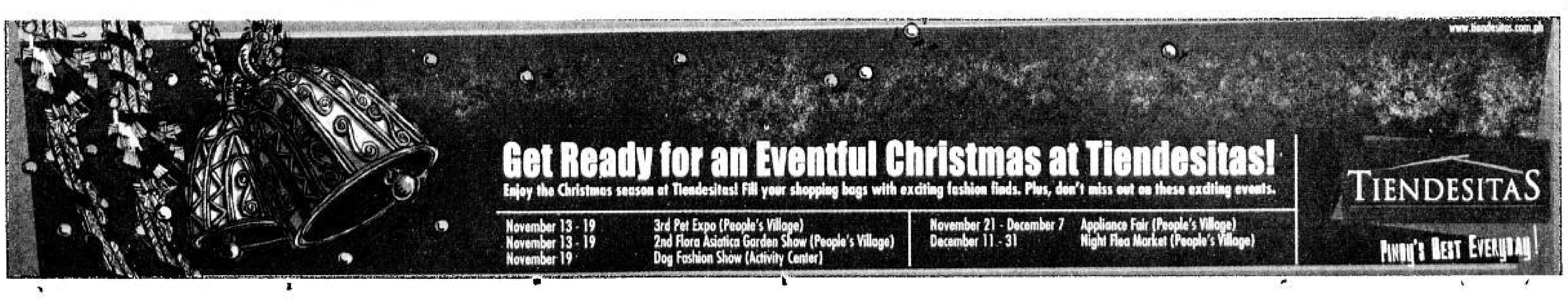

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PDI party central

THE COMPANY—(from left) Annie Quintos, Moy Ortiz, Sweet Plantado, Jay Marquez, Cecile Bautista—jump-starts the dancing. RYAN LIM

ZSAZSA serenades DENR Secretary Angelo Reyes. RAFFY LERMA

Big stars turned up for our 21st anniversary celebration

THEY CAME. THEY SAW. THEY partied.

Big names in entertainment and politics turned up at the Philippine Daily Inquirer compound in Makati on Friday to join in celebrating the paper's 21st anniversary.

Leading the VIP list were Vice President Noli de Castro and Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Angelo Reyes. Both politicos have show biz connections—the VP holds a day job as broadcaster and the environment secretary is one of the "Three Tenors" (along with Bayani Fernando, chair of the Metro Manila Development Authority, and Joey Lina, former senator).

True to form, Reyes graciously rendered duets with pros Bimbo Cerrudo and Zsazsa Padilla.

Obviously, Zsazsa had left her "Zaturnnah" costume at home, but not the gay sense of humor. She gamely traded rapid one-liners with hosts PDI's own Edna Garcia and Armin Adina.

The first two singers to arrive were Jed Madela and Lovi Poe, who worked the crowd to the max, followed by hot bands Cueshé, Imago and Calla Lily.

Not to be outdone was PDI's house band, Porn Star Super Bomba, which drew wild cheers from co-employees.

Keeping autograph-hunters and snapshot-seekers abuzz were nine of the 12 "Philippine Idol" finalists Drae Ybañez, Reymond Sajor, Arms Cruz, Apple Chiu, Ken Dingle, Miguel Mendoza, Giancarlo Magdangal, Mau Marcelo and Jan Nieto.

The "Idols" trooped all the way to Makati during a break from rehearsals for the grand finals set at the Araneta Coliseum that same weekend.

Capping the evening was heady dancing jump-started by The CompanY, who performed what they called *yugyugan* songs.

We could've danced all night.

Bayani San Diego Jr.

MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE G3

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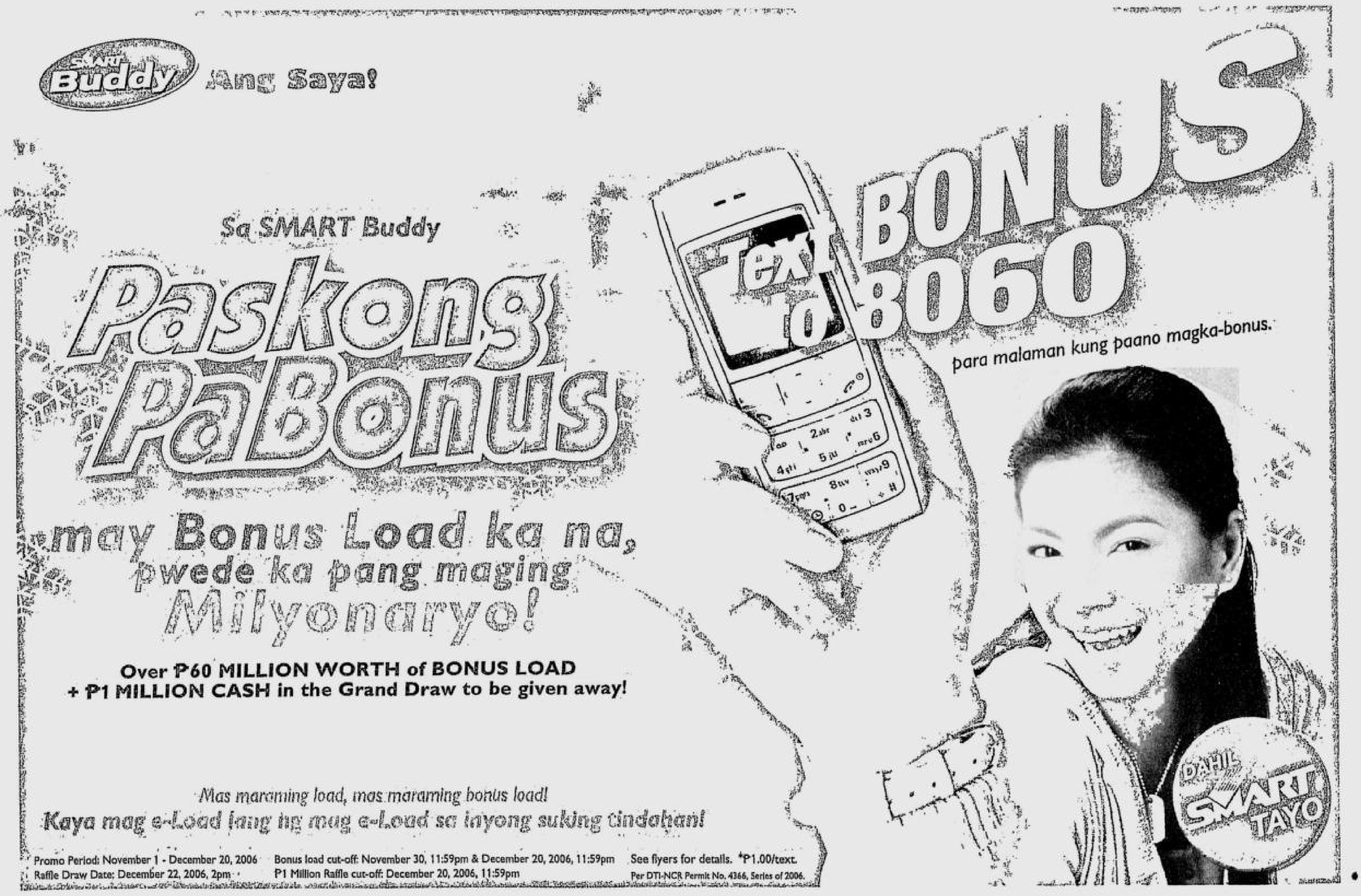
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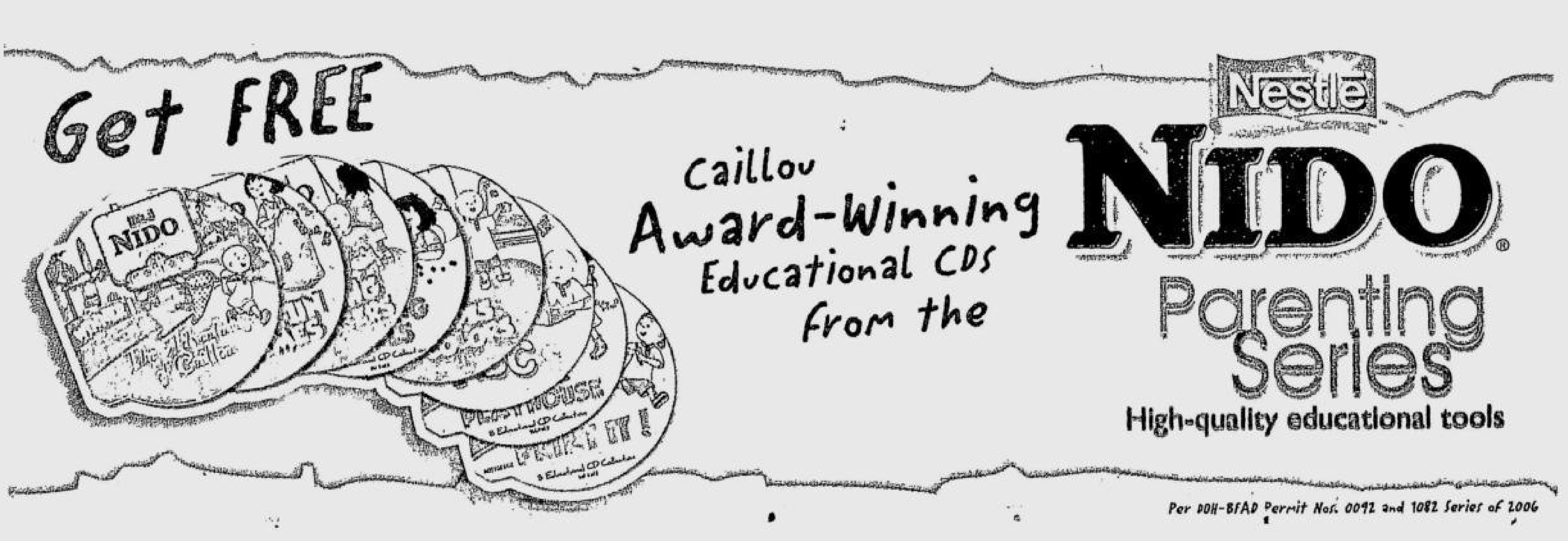
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Mel Gibson at work on his new film in Mexico. REUTERS

'Apocalypto' out to defy predictions

LOS ANGELES—"APOCALYPTO," MEL GIBSON's first film since his anti-Semitic tirade last summer, opened on Friday as Hollywood wondered whether his career, like the Mayan civilization the movie depicts, is doomed to collapse or poised for resurrection.

Ushered into a crowded holiday-season marketplace with largely favorable reviews and ample media buzz, "Apocalypto" has defied easy predictions by industry analysts seeking to forecast its commercial potential.

"We have to see whether all this awareness translates into box office. It's tough to call," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracking firm Media By Numbers, who put the film's likely US gross at between $13 million and $17 million through Sunday.

Typical blockbuster

Such a tally would pale in comparison to the $84 million bow of Gibson's last movie, "The Passion of the Christ" in 2004. But in a weekend when the multiplex is bustling with several big box-office contenders, an opening in the mid-teens may be enough to rank as No. 1.

As a hyper-violent, R-rated movie with subtitles and a cast of unknown performers, the movie hardly fits the profile of a typical Hollywood blockbuster.

Many reviews have praised "Apocalypto" as a gripping and visually spectacular work, though one with an exceedingly high quotient of blood and guts.

Once is enough

Film critic Joe Morgenstern of the Wall Street Journal on Friday called it "the most obsessively, graphically violent film I'd ever seen." But he went on to hail it as "a visionary work with its own wild integrity." Yet he added: "seeing it once is enough for one lifetime."

The film also is vying for attention against several other wide releases this weekend, including action thriller "Blood Diamond," starring Leonardo DiCaprio and the romantic comedy "The Holiday," with Kate Winslet and Cameron Diaz.

Aggressive

And all those films face formidable competition from the ongoing successful runs of the latest James Bond adventure, "Casino Royale," and the computer-animated dancing penguins of "Happy Feet."

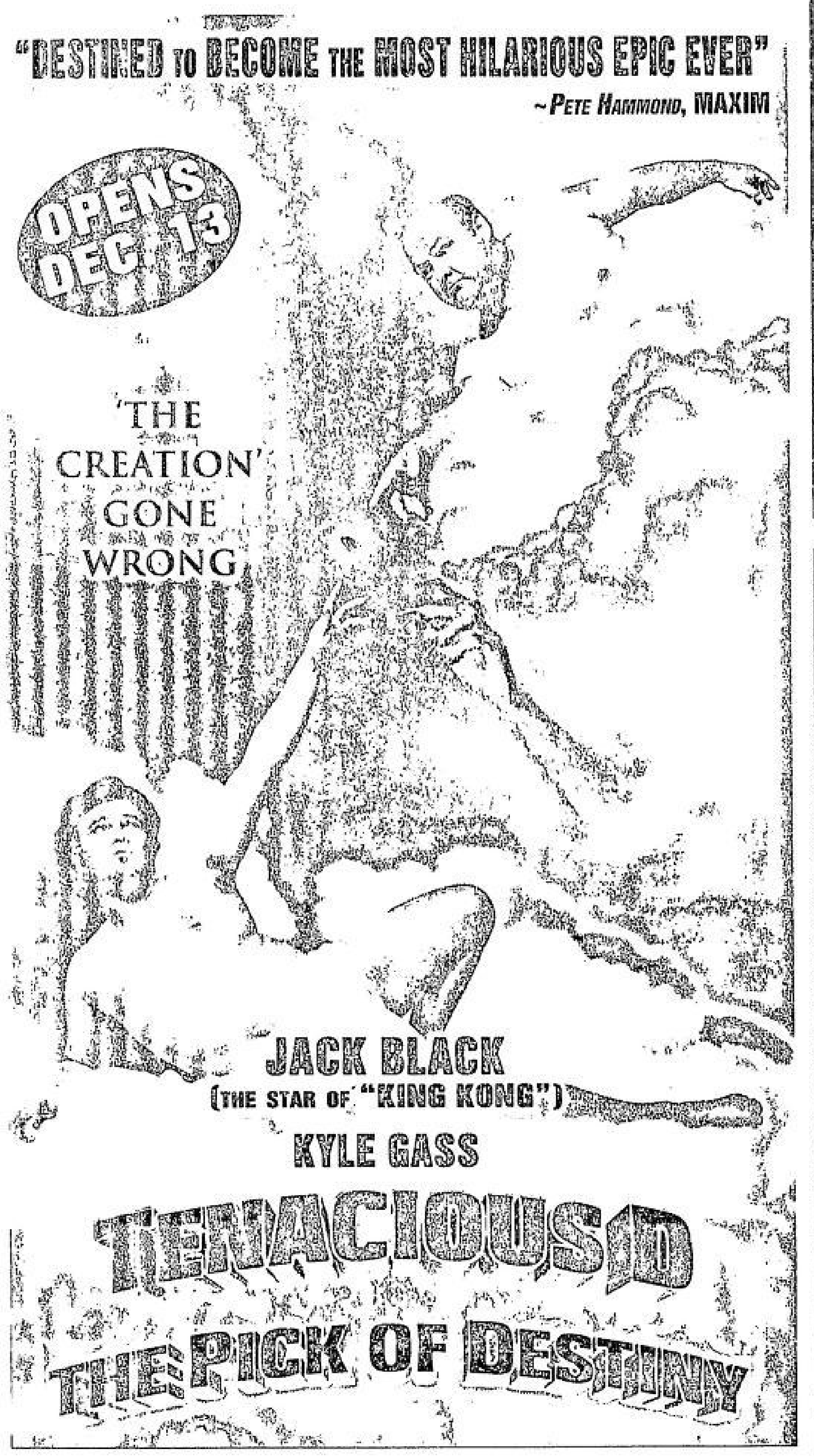
What "Apocalypto" has going for it is an aggressive marketing campaign by distributor Walt Disney Co., with special attention paid to Spanish-language media, and intense hype surrounding the film's pedigree as the latest work by the Oscar-winning Gibson.

Track record

Gibson has defied the odds before. "The Passion of the Christ," a graphically violent, Aramaic-language dramatization of the final hours in the life of Jesus, exceeded all expectations by grossing $612 million in worldwide ticket sales.

The film's success turned in large part on an unusual promo campaign aimed at Christian moviegoers and on controversy generated by criticism of the film by Jewish leaders.

Another of Gibson's intensely violent period pieces, his 1995 epic "Braveheart," won five Academy Awards, including Oscars for Best Picture and Best Director. *Reuters*



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CASINO ROYALE 007 PG13 1:15,4:10,7:05,10:00	BORAT R18 2:00,4:00, 6:00,8:00	THE NATIVITY STORY PG13 1:35,3.45,5:55, 8:05,10:15

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KAMASUTRA 3 12:50 / 3:05 / 5:20 / 7:35 / 9:50	CASINO ROYALE 1:20 / 4:10 / 7:00 / 9:50	REYNA 12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9:30	ALL THE KING'S MEN 1:00 / 3:40 / 6:20 / 9:00

Alimall 5

INANG YAYA 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	CASINO ROYALE 12:00 / 2:50 / 5:40 / 8:30	THE NATIVITY 1:05 / 3:30 / 5:55 / 8:20
REYNA 11:45 / 1:55 / 4:05 / 6:15 / 8:25	KAMASUTRA 3 12:05 R3 / 1:40 / 3:55 / 6:10 / 8:25	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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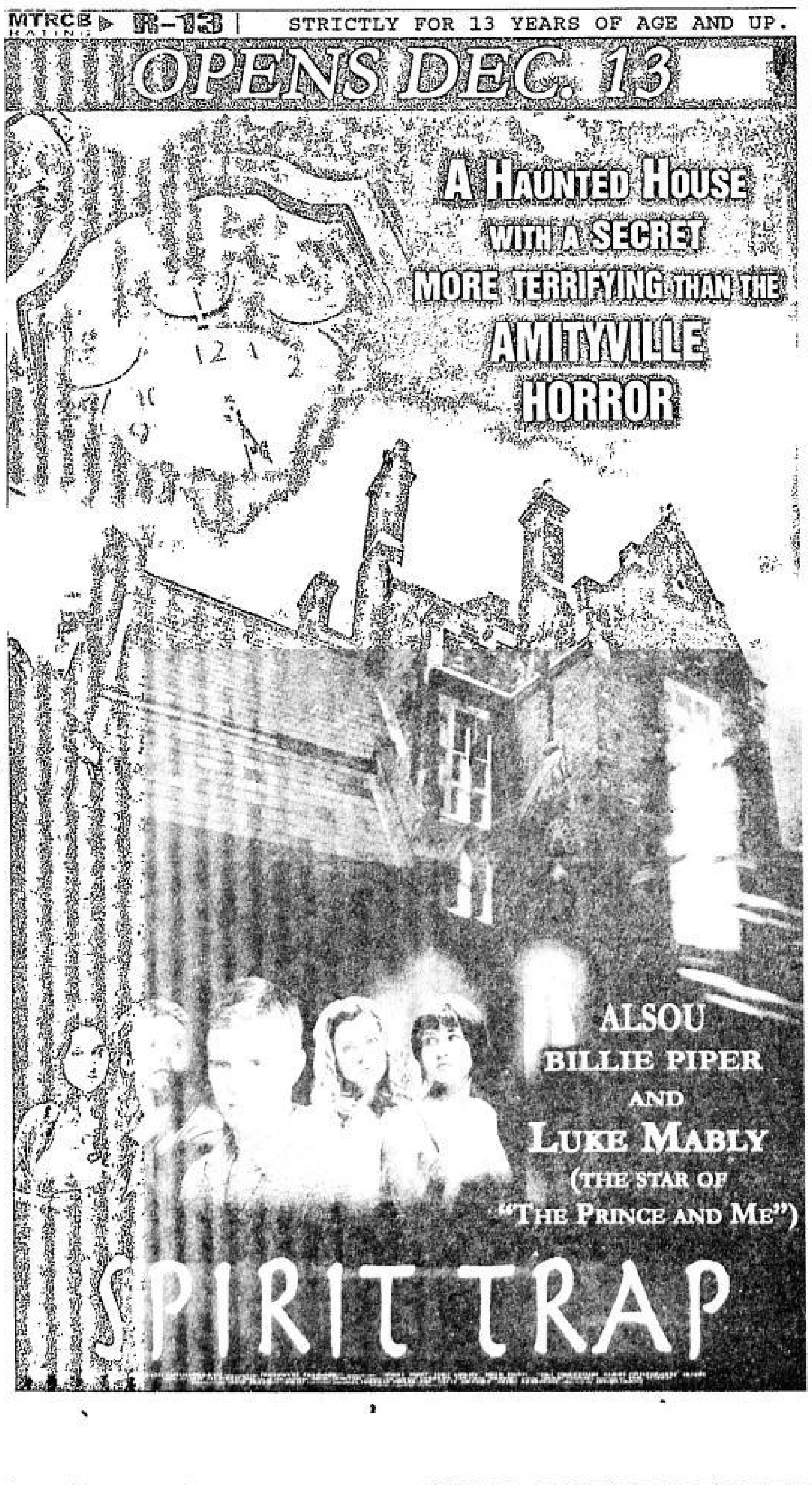

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HOSTS Edna Garcia and Adina flank the "Idol" finalists—(from left) Drae Ybañez, Reymond Sajor, Arms Cruz, Apple Chiu, Ken Dingle, Miguel Mendoza, Giancarlo Magdangal, Mau Marcelo and Jan Nieto.

RUDY ESPERAS

CUESHÉ is a hit.

NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

ZSAZSA cozies up to host Armin Adina.

RYAN LIM

IMAGO wows 'em.

NINO JESUS ORBETA

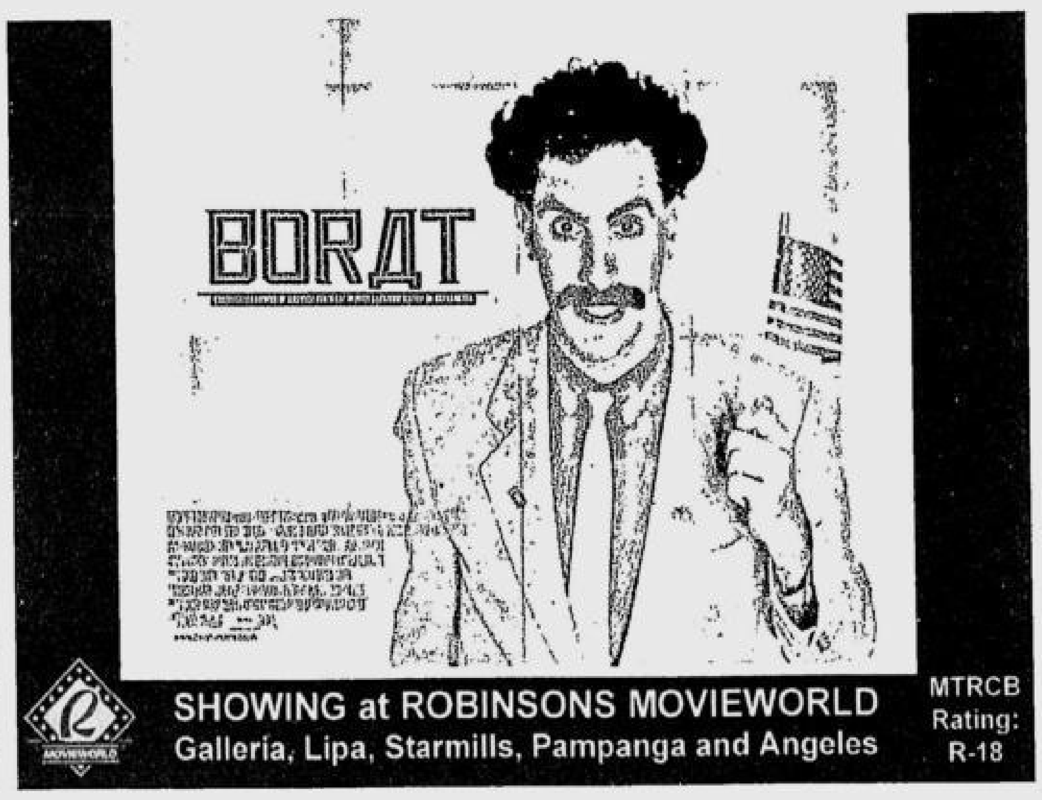
BIMBO Cerrudo shares the stage with Reyes.

JED MADELA

RYAN LIM

CALLA LILY

RYAN LIM



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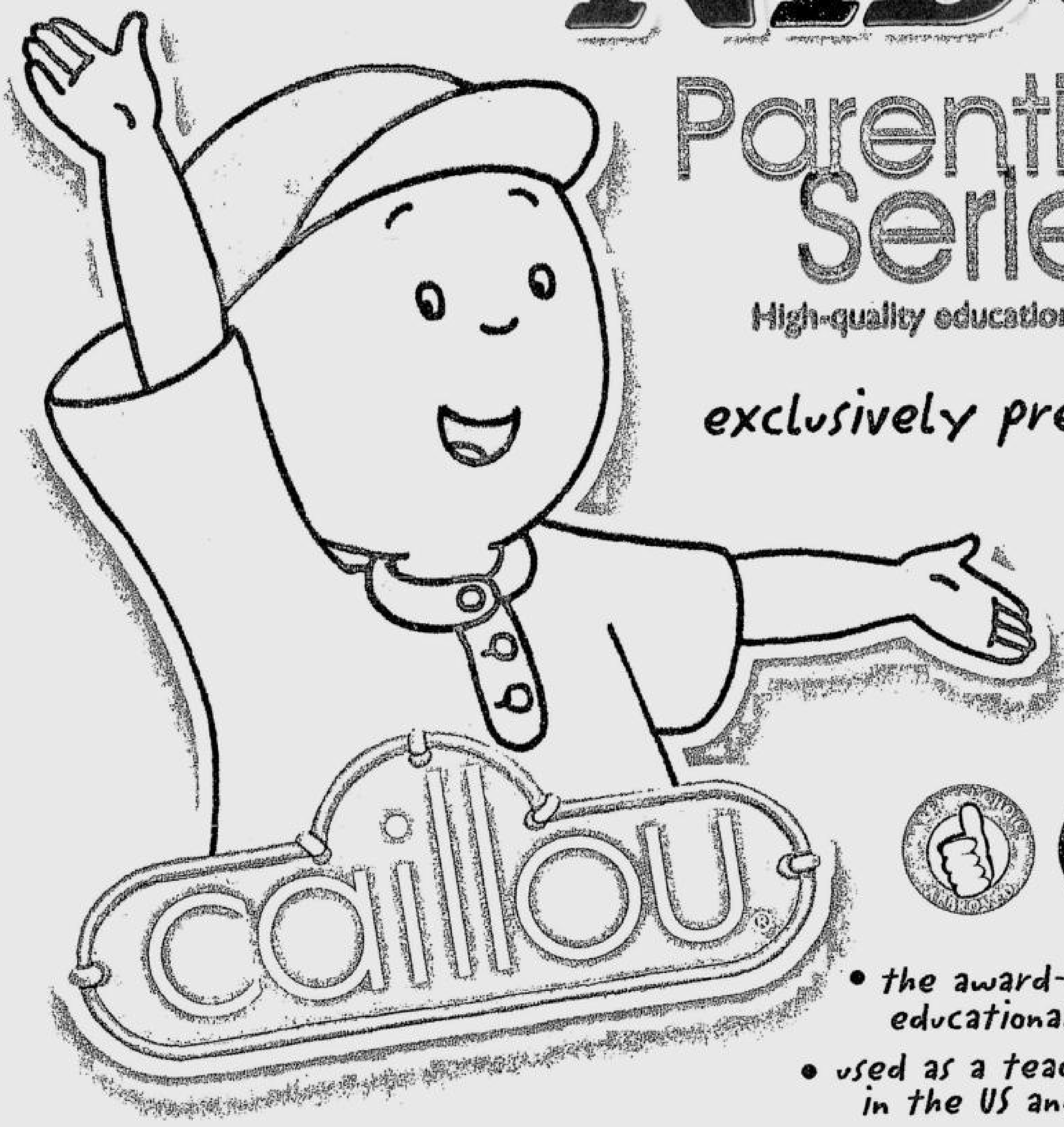

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PORN Star Super Bomba is cheered by the hometown crowd. RYAN LIM

PDI president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez enjoys the show with VP Noli de Castro. RYAN LIM

LOVI is sweetness personified. RYAN LIM

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	The Score Part 2	December 15, 2006	8:00 PM - 8:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16, 2006	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
RPN	The Score Part 1	December 14, 2006	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	The Score Part 2	December 15, 2006	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16, 2006	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
CABLE CHANNEL	PROGRAM	DATE	TIME
Jolo Cable Network Channel 2	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Magundanao Skycable Cotabato City Channel 3	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Bongao Cable Tawi-Tawi Channel 3	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
CPU Alumni Metro Iloilo City Channel 3	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
PECBC - Medina, Misamis Oriental Ch 4	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Jolo Cable Network Channel 7	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
DYPR (ABS-CBN) Palawan Channel 7	The Score	December 14 & 15	6:00 PM - 6:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	5:30 PM - 6:30 PM
Kismet Cable Pagadian City Channel 8	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
ABS-CBN Pagadian, Zamboanga Channel 9	The Score	December 14 & 15	5:30 PM - 6:00 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	4:30 PM - 5:30 PM
ABS-CBN Ozamis, Misamis Occidental Channel 9	The Score	December 14 & 15	5:30 PM - 6:00 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	4:30 PM - 5:30 PM
DEARBC Cable TV Manolo Fortich Bukidnon Ch 10	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Fil Products Butuan City, Nasipit Channel 17	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Gemstar Cable San Francisco, Agusan del Sur Channel 17	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Oneni Cable Dipolog City Channel 18	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

TV NETWORK	PROGRAM	DATE	TIME
IBC	The Score Part 1	December 14, 2006	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	The Score Part 2	December 15, 2006	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16, 2006	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
2nd AVENUE	The Score Part 1	December 14, 2006	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	The Score Part 2	December 15, 2006	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16, 2006	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
CABLE CHANNEL	PROGRAM	DATE	TIME
JVL Star Cable TV – Sultan Kudarat Channel 2	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Tri-Ex – Virac, Catanduanes Channel 2	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Marinduque Cable – Marinduque Channel 3	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
New City Cable TV – Isabela Channel 3	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Saturn Cable – Northern Samar Channel 3	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Camiguin Island Cable TV – Mambajao, Mahinog, Camiguin Channel 4	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Caceres Cable TV – Naga City Channel 4	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Tabuk Kalinga Apayao Channel 6	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Eagle Vision – Bantay, Ilocos Sur Channel 6	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Nabunturan Cable TV – Nabunturan, Montevista & Compostela Channel 6	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Asian Vision Cable – Lucena City & Tayabas, Quezon Channel 6	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Misamis Cable TV – Oroquieta, Jimenez, Ozamis, Tudela, Aloran Channel 7	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Cordillera CATV Network – Kalinga Apayao Channel 8	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
L&S Cable – San Jose, Occidental Mindoro Channel 8	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Tamaraw TV Net – Calapan, Oriental Mindoro Channel 10	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Reliance Cable – Catarman, Northern Samar Channel 13	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Lagawe Multi-Purpose Coop – Lagawe Ifugao Channel 15	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Solsona Cable TV – Solsona, Ilocos Norte Channel 15	The Score	December 14 & 15	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM
	Ang Kasagutan	December 16	7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

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MY HOPE
PHILIPPINES

MEGAWORLD CORPORATION

Making a Giant Mark on Metro Manila's Landscape

Residential condominiums...

Megaworld Corporation is taking Philippine real estate to greater heights. As the country's largest residential condominium developer and business process outsourcing (BPO) landlord, it is a driving force—and one of the few trendsetters—in the property industry.

Since 1994, it has launched more than 200 residential buildings, office towers, commercial centers and a hotel, with a total floor area of more than two million square meters. With this unsurpassed record, the developer is carving out a solid reputation ahead of its competitors.

Distinguishing itself as an innovator, Megaworld has seized and capitalized on new market trends. And every year, it creates real estate—from homes to offices to retail centers—that goes beyond the beautiful and above the ordinary.

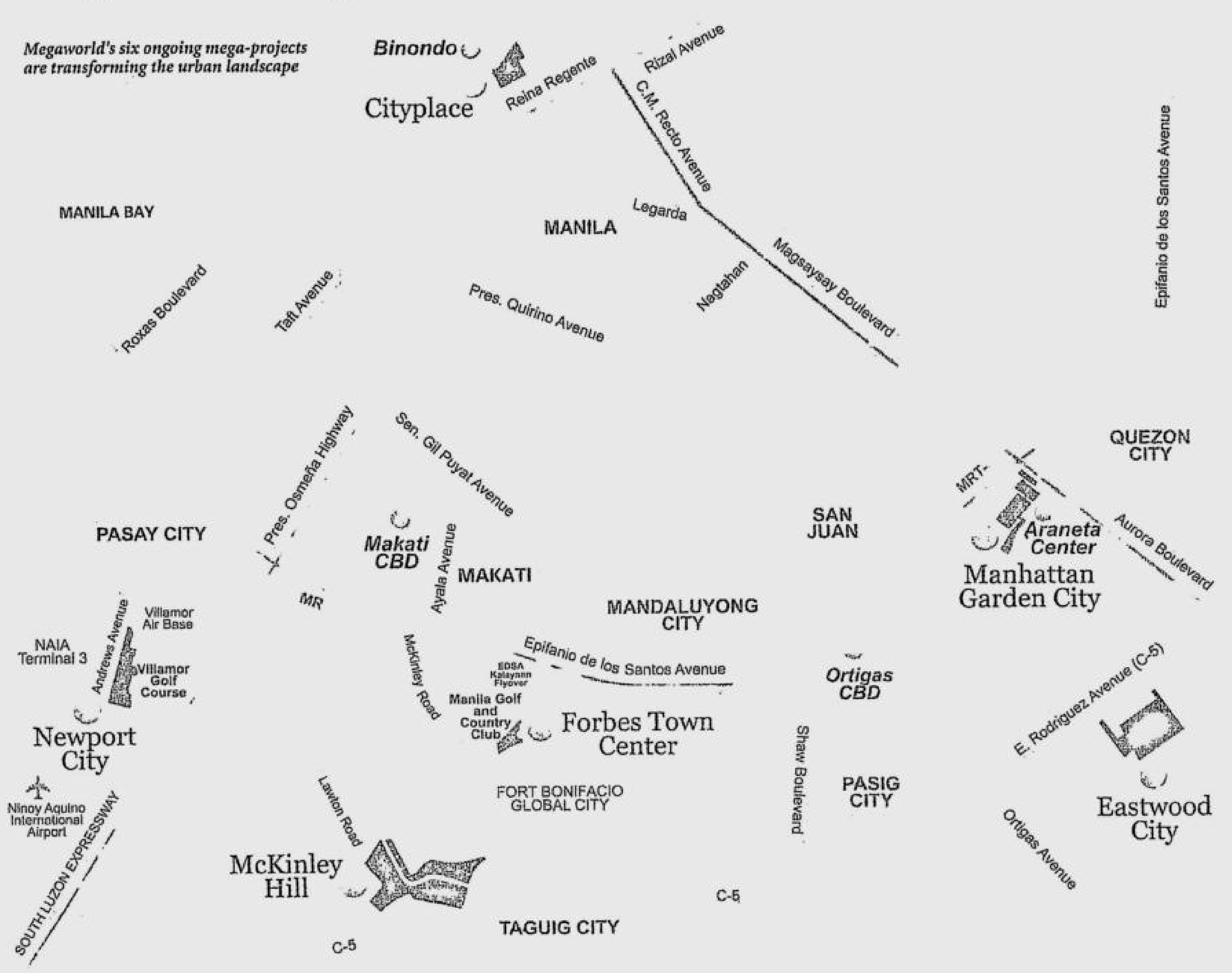
...and BPO offices are the market segments where Megaworld leads

Mega-sizing Communities in Metro Manila

In recent years, Megaworld has brought about a shift in demand from stand-alone projects to large-scale community developments with a strong residential condominium component. These projects, literally mega-communities, locate residences, workplaces and commercial centers in one setting. Here, people live better, richer lives—and enjoy more value from their homes—because everything is equally accessible.

The Eastwood City township in Quezon City is Megaworld's first salvo in building mega-communities. This 16-hectare enclave best exemplifies the developer's commitment to introduce exciting new urban lifestyles. Today, Eastwood City serves as Megaworld's inspiration for a series of massive projects set to reinvent the face of the metro.

Megaworld's six ongoing mega-projects are transforming the urban landscape

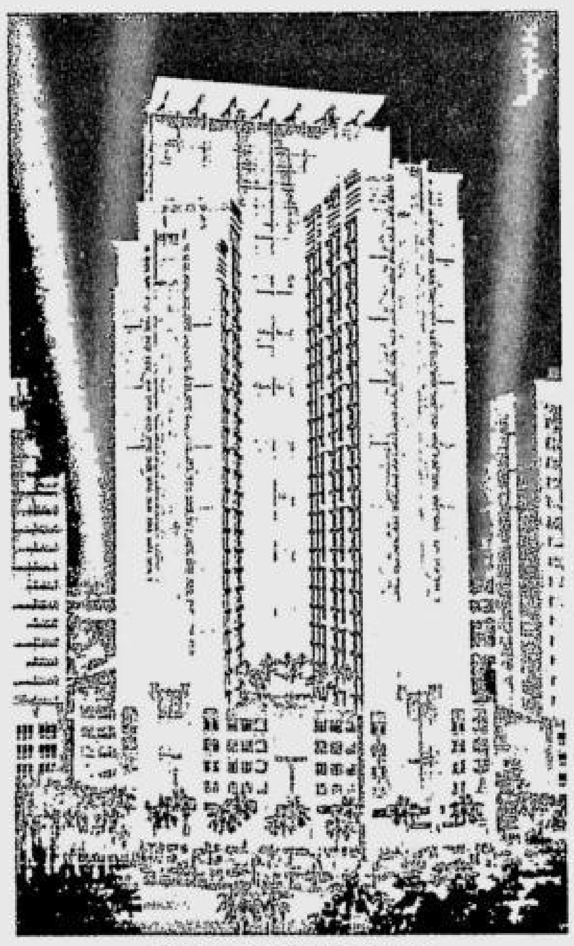


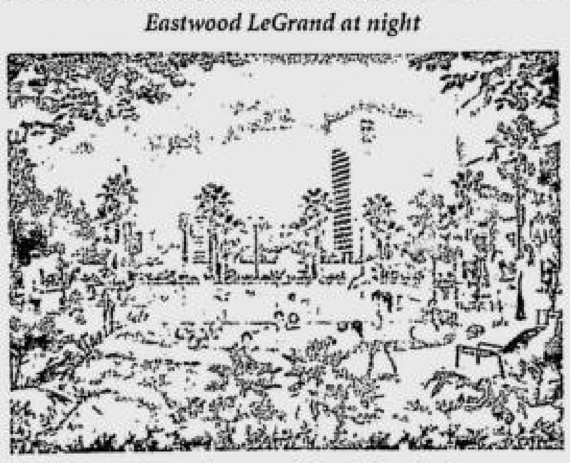
Binondo
Cityplace
Reina Regente
Rizal Avenue
C.M. Recto Avenue
MANILA BAY
MANILA
Legarda
Epifanio de los Santos Avenue
Roxas Boulevard
Taft Avenue
Pres. Quirino Avenue
Nagtahan
Magsaysay Boulevard
Pres. Osmeña Highway
Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue
QUEZON CITY
MRT
PASAY CITY
Makati CBD
Ayala Avenue
MAKATI
SAN JUAN
Araneta Center
Aurora Boulevard
Manhattan Garden City
MR
MANDALUYONG CITY
Villamor Air Base
Andrews Avenue
NAIA Terminal 3
Villamor Golf Course
McKinley Road
Epifanio de los Santos Avenue
EDSA Kalayaan Flyover
Ortigas CBD
E. Rodriguez Avenue (C-5)
Manila Golf and Country Club
Forbes Town Center
Newport City
Ninoy Aquino International Airport
FORT BONIFACIO GLOBAL CITY
Shaw Boulevard
PASIG CITY
Eastwood City
SOUTH LUZON EXPRESSWAY
Lawton Road
Ortigas Avenue
McKinley Hill
C-5
TAGUIG CITY
C-5

Eastwood City

Bagumbayan, Quezon City

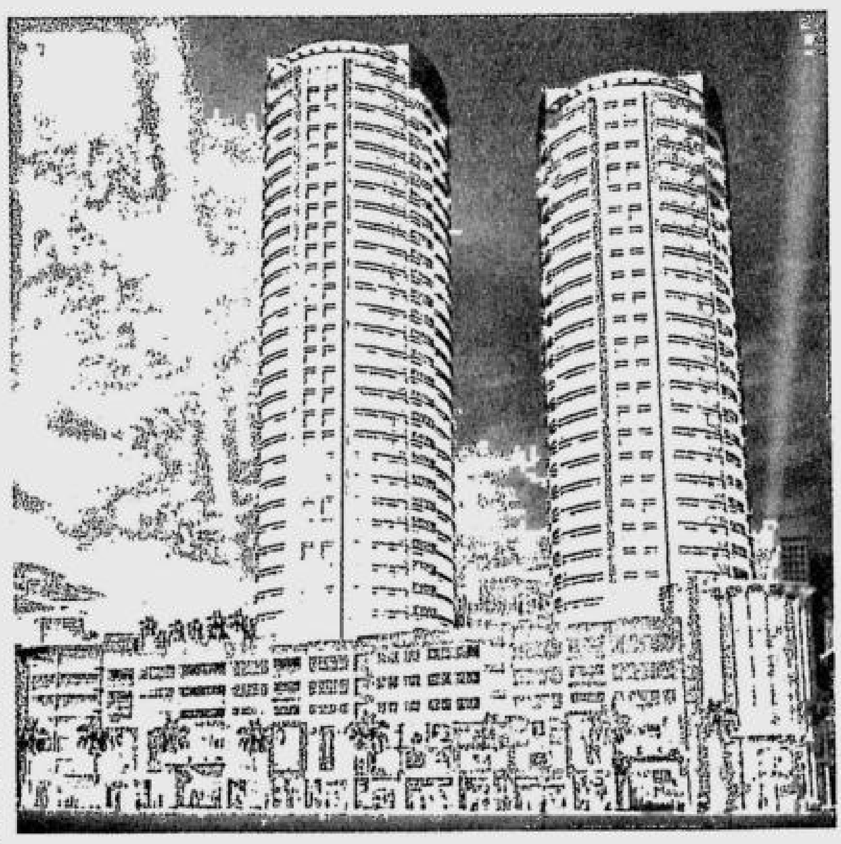
Megaworld has fashioned in Eastwood City a residential block that is the epitome of its uncompromising stance against real estate that is boring and predictable. It is a community of uniquely themed, good-looking homes made to accommodate—and satisfy—all manner of customer tastes and expectations.


Eastwood LeGrand at night


LeGrand's seventh-level play deck

Expanding the residential offerings at Eastwood City is **Eastwood LeGrand,** set at the heart of the new Palm District. The 38-story address boasts a contemporary design that incorporates Art Deco details. The project's studio pads to one-bedroom homes are matched by first-rate play amenities at the seventh level. And as part of the Eastwood City community, Eastwood LeGrand benefits from a choice location that is a few steps away from modern lifestyle conveniences.

The twin-tower first phase showing the ground-level shopping complex



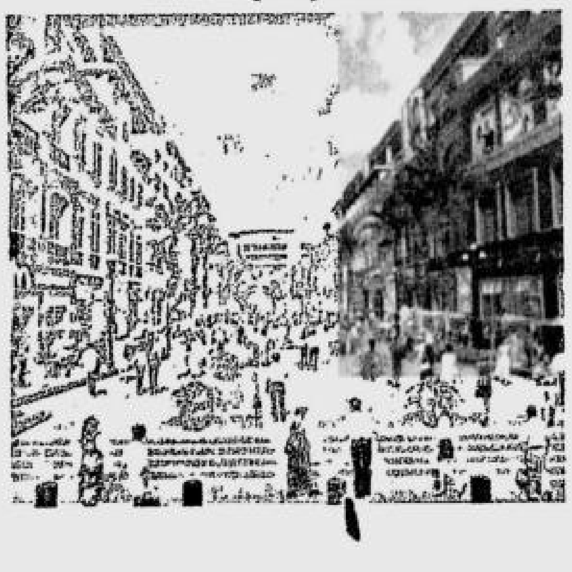
Cityplace

Binondo, Manila

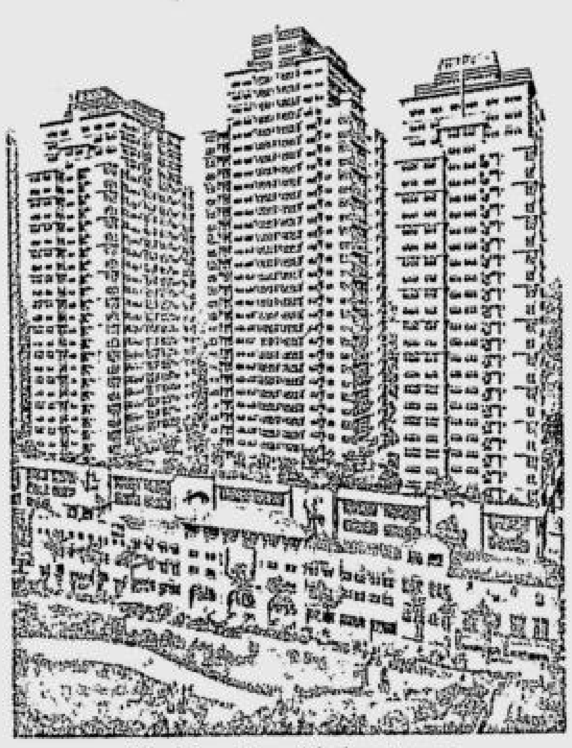
Cityplace emerges as the largest development of its kind in Manila's Chinatown in the last 25 years. Featuring residential condominium towers, a shopping center, a boutique hotel and a centerpiece promenade, the project not only pays tribute to Binondo as a melting pot of Malay, Spanish and Chinese influences but also preserves and enhances its rich heritage.

Two 35-story residential towers comprise the project's **Phase 1**. The first tower hosts three- to four-bedroom suites while the second tower features two-bedroom homes. The residences are complemented by a sprawling play area, close to 15,000 square meters, at the seventh level. Here, homeowners are a breath away from top-notch sporting and recreational options. With more than 300 ornamental trees and shrubs, residents also take pleasure in a nature-rich setting right within the community.

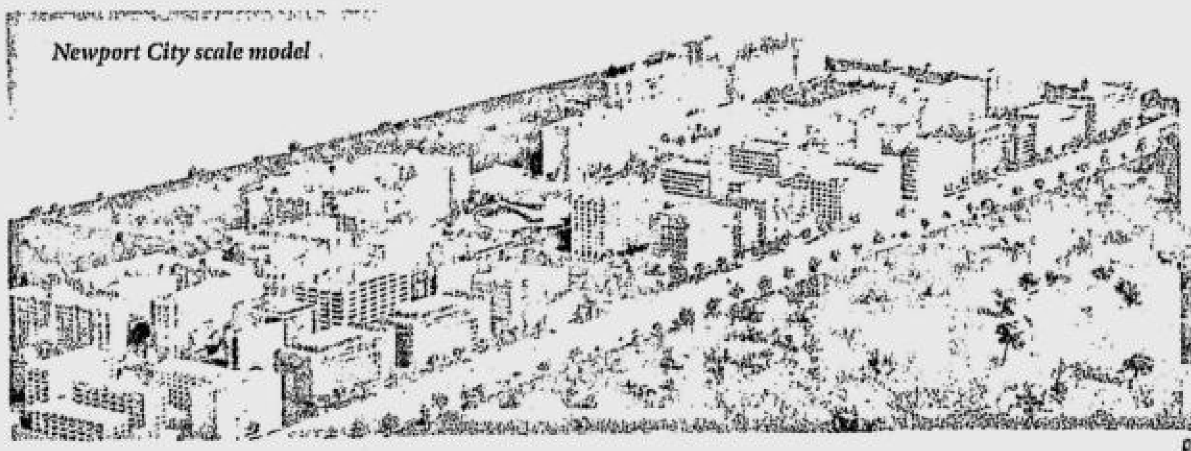
Lush centerpiece promenade

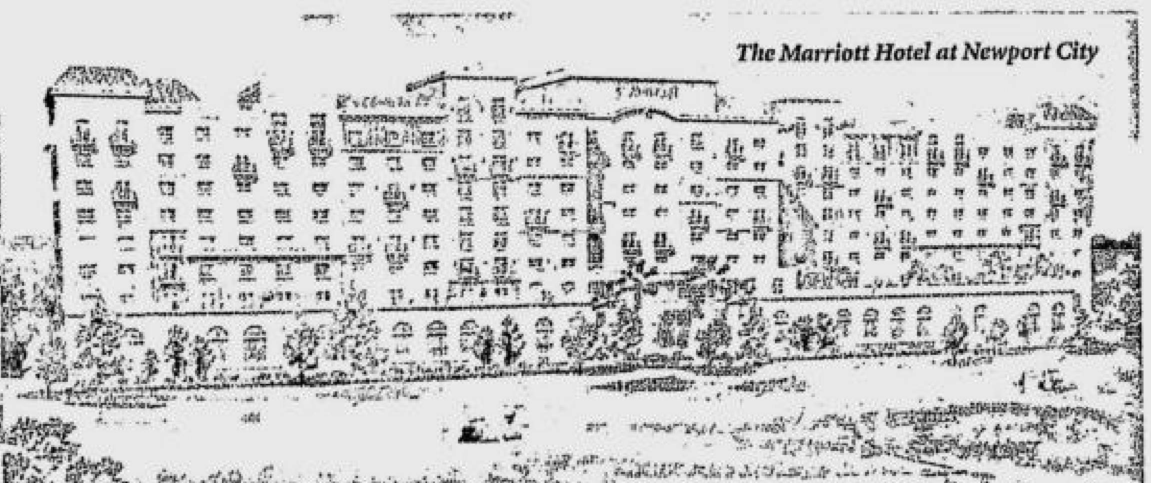


Offering well-designed, economically sized homes ideal for young professionals and families is **The Olympian,** the second phase of Cityplace. Residents can choose from one- to two-bedroom homes that come with an exclusive recreational area featuring a 20-meter lap pool with in-water lounge, gym, outdoor fitness station, function area, a children's playground and pool and landscaped gardens. At Cityplace, homeowners of both the first and second phases enjoy quick access to a three-level retail complex below the residential floors.


The Olympian with three towers

MEGAWORLD CORPORATION


Newport City scale model


The Marriott Hotel at Newport City

Villamor golf course

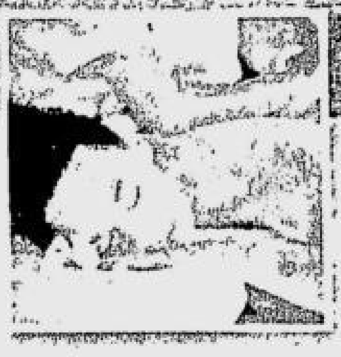
Newport City

Villamor Air Base, Pasay City

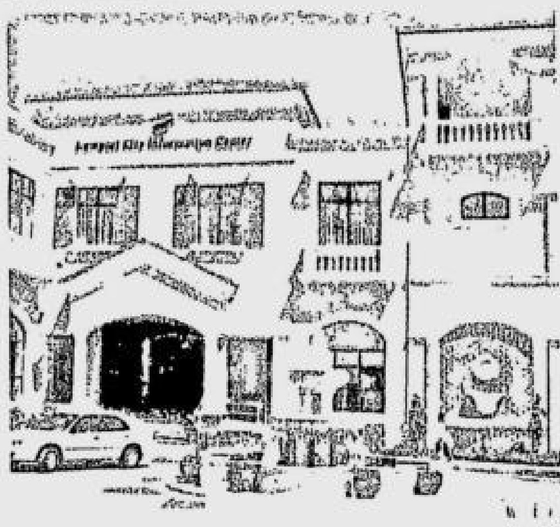
The 25-hectare Newport City, set next to the championship Villamor golf course, is envisioned as one of the most exciting hotel-and-golf resorts in the region. Featuring the same live-work-play formula that has made Eastwood City successful, it combines a low-density residential area with a hotel, themed shopping-dining-entertainment hub, an office park and institutional center with a sports club, church and other community facilities.

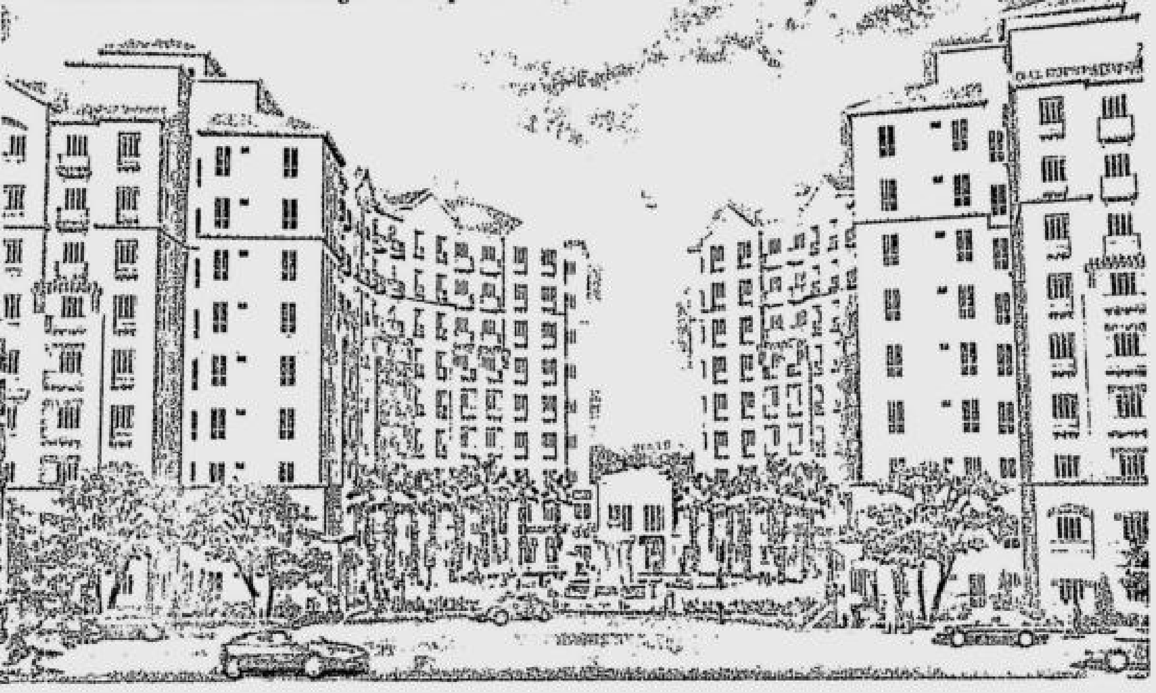
Newport City's residential section, **The Residential Resort,** boasts Metro Manila's first and only luxury homes. It is divided into three phases with a total of 16 buildings: Montecito, Sarasota and Pinehurst. Residents can unwind in plush condominium homes, clustered around deluxe amenities, in a lush environment mostly dedicated to greenery and wide, open spaces.

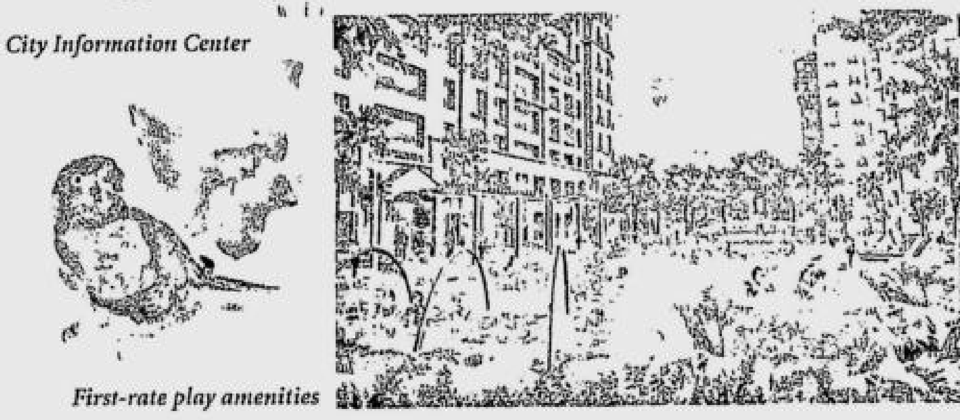
Today, Megaworld has started construction of the five-star, 356-room **Marriott Newport Hotel** and the **Newport Commercial Center,** inspired by The Grove in Los Angeles.


World-class spa facilities at the Marriott

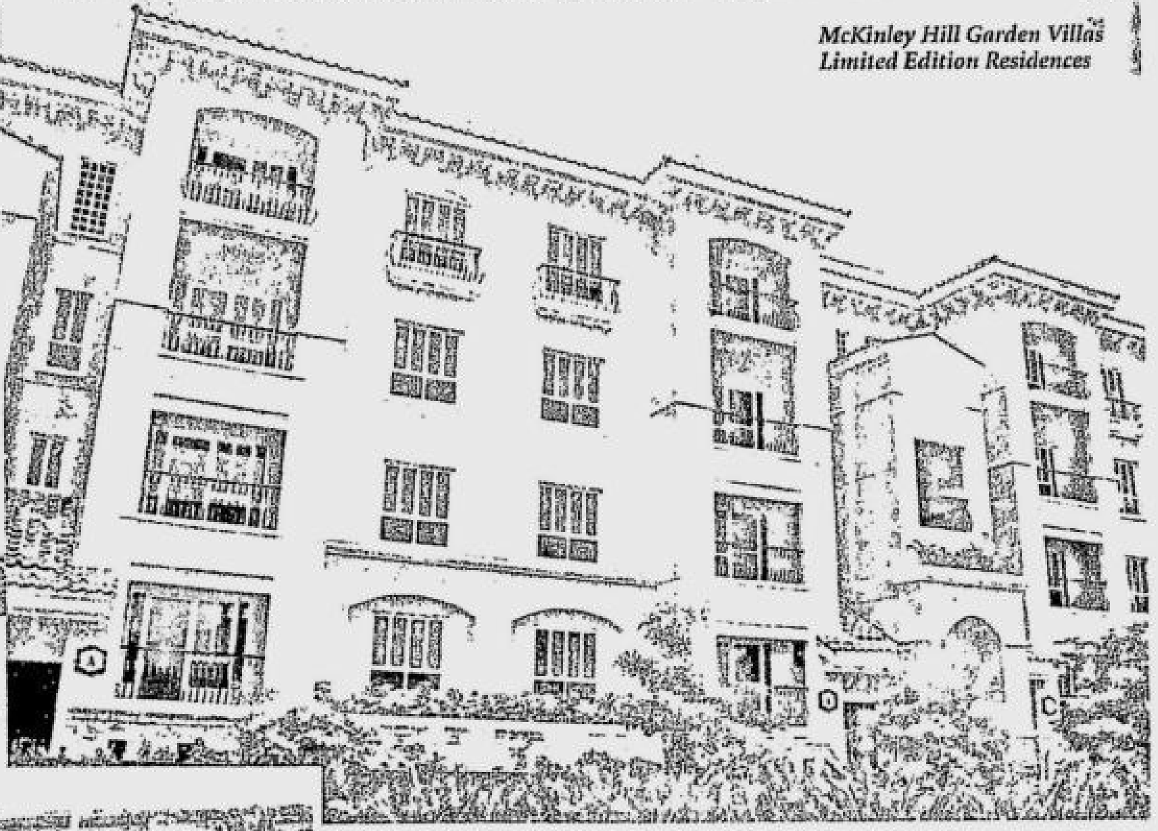
Lavish interiors of The Residential Resort's model home


The Newport City Information Center


Residential clusters encircling a central plaza


First-rate play amenities

Model homes at McKinley Hill Village, the first residential phase.

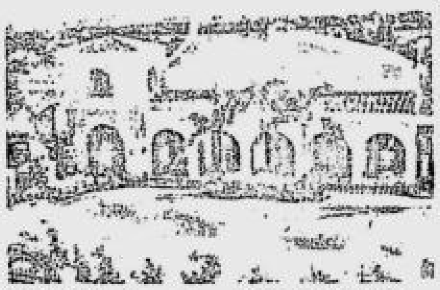
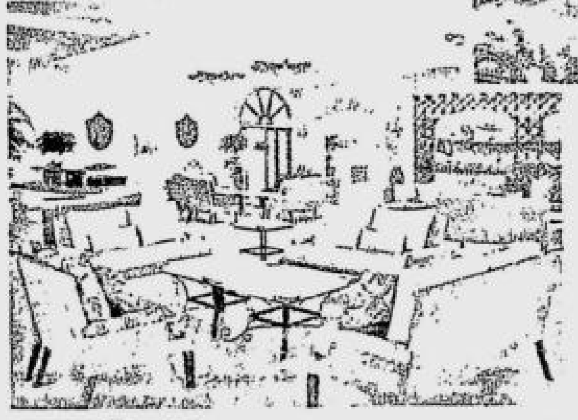

McKinley Hill Garden Villas Limited Edition Residences

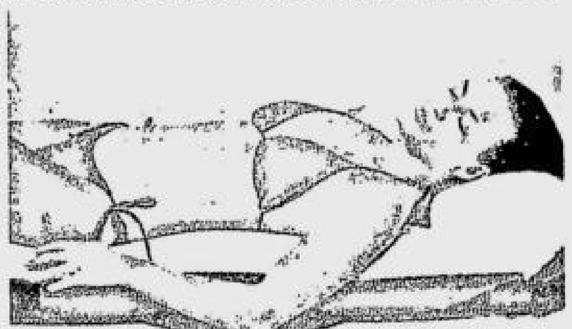
McKinley Hill

Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City

Megaworld's vision of a world-class enclave is taking shape at the 50-hectare McKinley Hill township. Bringing together residential, office, institutional and retail blocks, it offers a complete, well-balanced lifestyle for those who choose to make it their home.

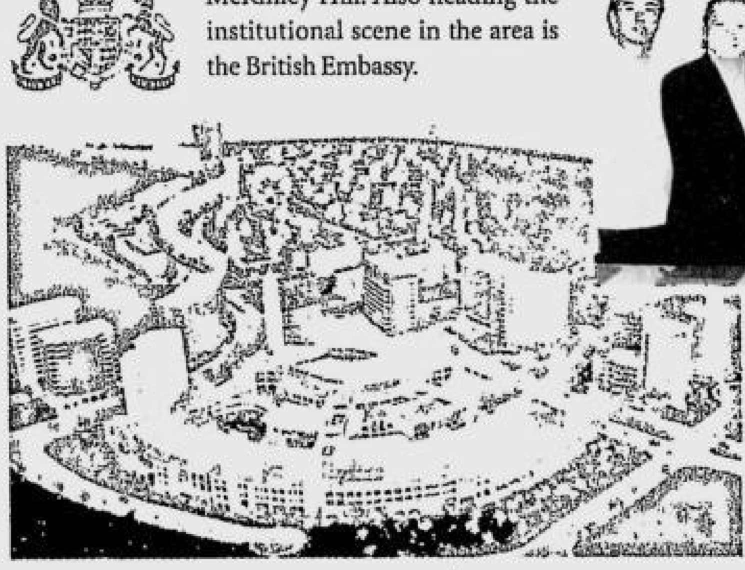
Megaworld has forged ties with two prestigious entities to anchor the project's **institutional block.** Enderun Colleges offers top-notch training in the global hospitality industry. Through Enderun and other upcoming school partners such as the Korean and Chinese International Schools, Megaworld is adding a "learn" element to McKinley Hill. Also heading the institutional scene in the area is the British Embassy.

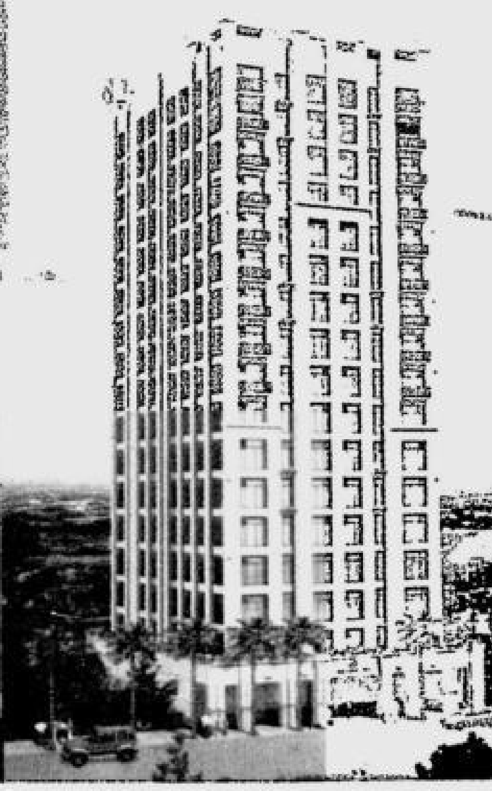


Mediterranean-style amenities at McKinley Hill Village's clubhouse complex

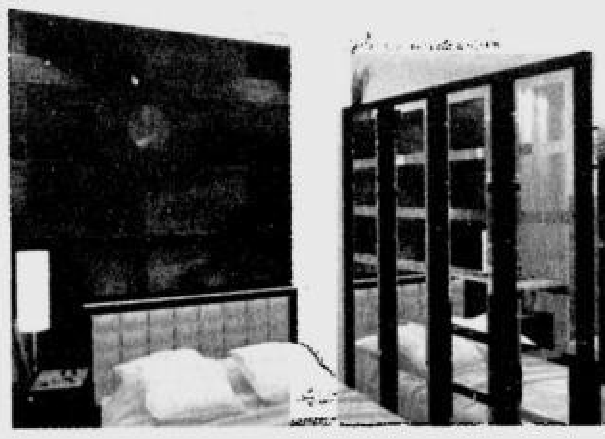


Among the project's new residential attractions are the **McKinley Hill Garden Villas Limited Edition Residences** and **Stamford Executive Residences.** The Spanish-Mediterranean-inspired Garden Villas feature 40 limited edition suites in two five-story buildings. Meanwhile, Stamford showcases studio units, play amenities at the roof deck level and a retail area at the ground floor.

Megaworld ties up with Enderun Colleges...

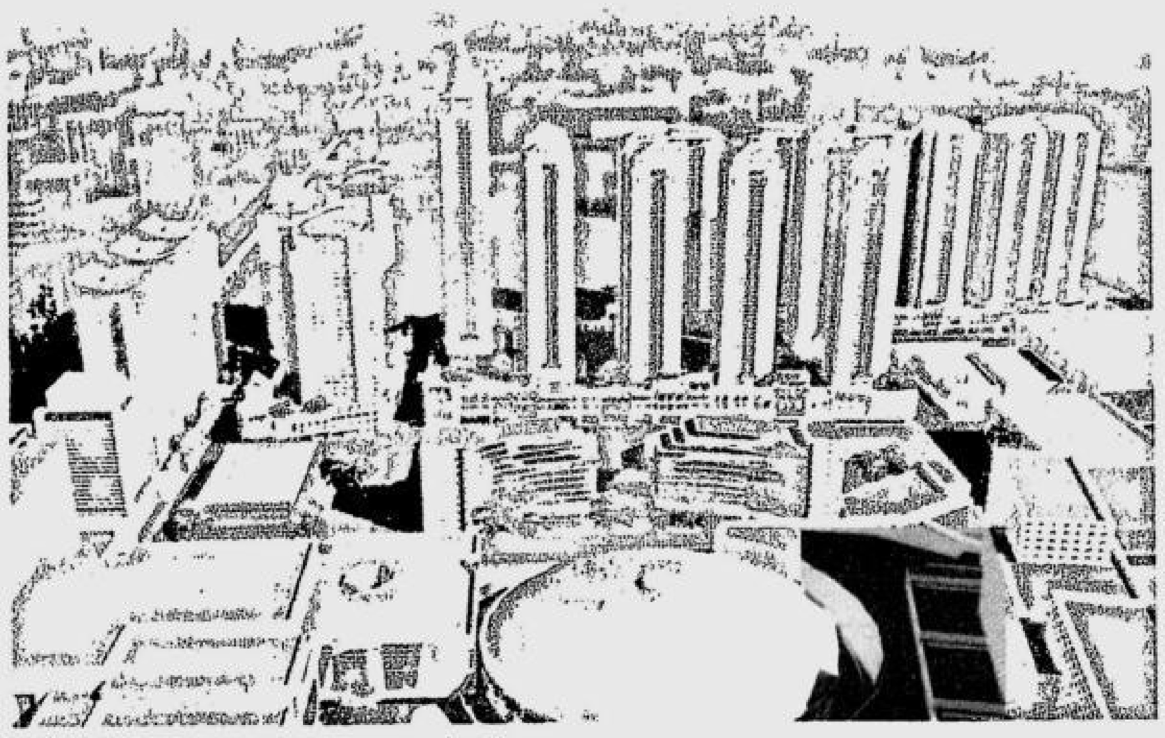

...to anchor McKinley Hill's institutional block


Stamford Executive Residences


Cozy interiors of a Stamford home

Manhattan Garden City

Araneta Center, Cubao, Quezon City

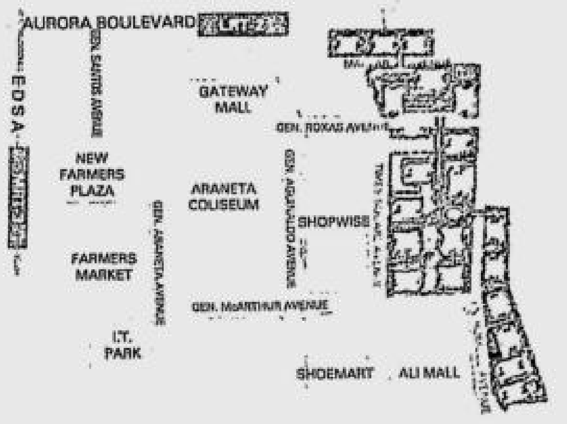

The 20-tower Manhattan Garden City

The five-hectare, 20-tower Manhattan Garden City is Megaworld's breakthrough project at the heart of the Araneta Center. Dubbed as the country's first-ever transit-oriented development, it offers matchless accessibility to the metro's key destinations with its direct link to the mass transportation systems of the LRT-2 and MRT-3. With both stations also connecting to the LRT-1, the project brings people a truly mobile lifestyle in a highly strategic location.

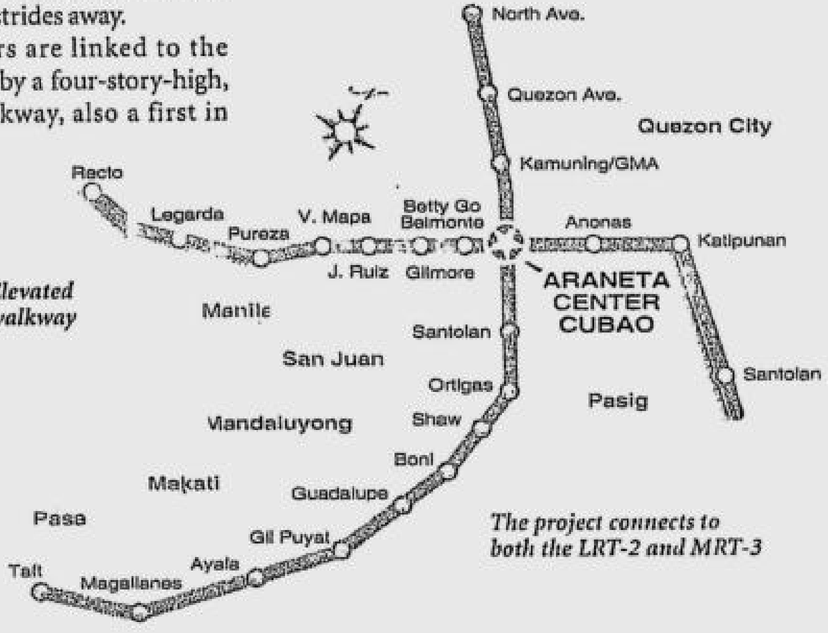
Manhattan Parkway, the three-tower first phase, is home to executive studios and one-bedroom units. These residences, combined with an impressive array of recreational amenities that relax and rejuvenate, showcase a privileged lifestyle. Close by are the Araneta Center's shopping, dining and entertainment hubs, all a few strides away.

The three Parkway towers are linked to the buildings of the other phases by a four-story-high, 729-meter-long garden walkway, also a first in the Philippines.

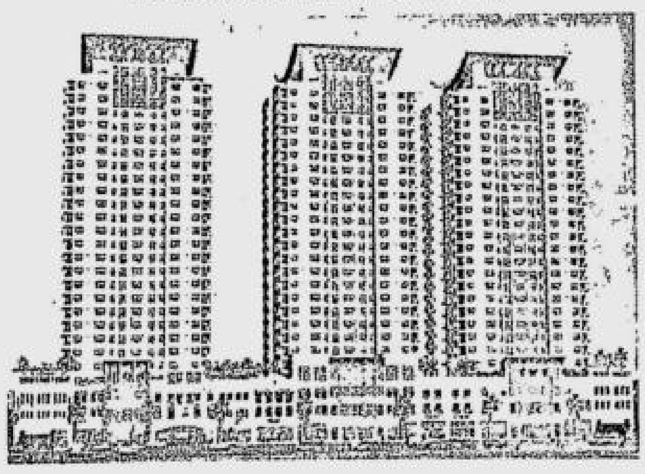
Manhattan Garden City
AT THE ARANETA CENTER

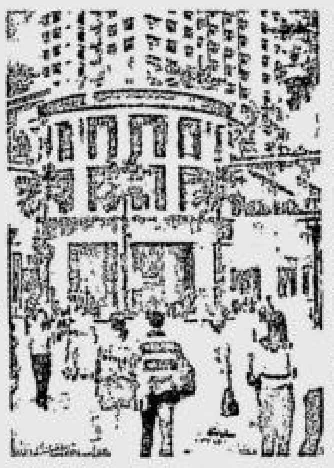


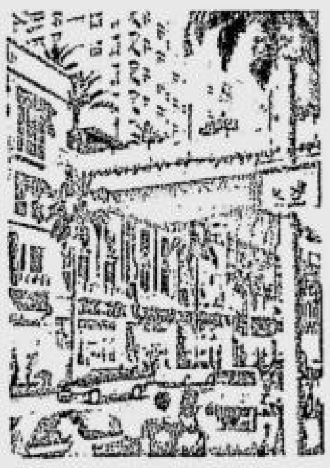
The fourth-level garden deck



The project connects to both the LRT-2 and MRT-3

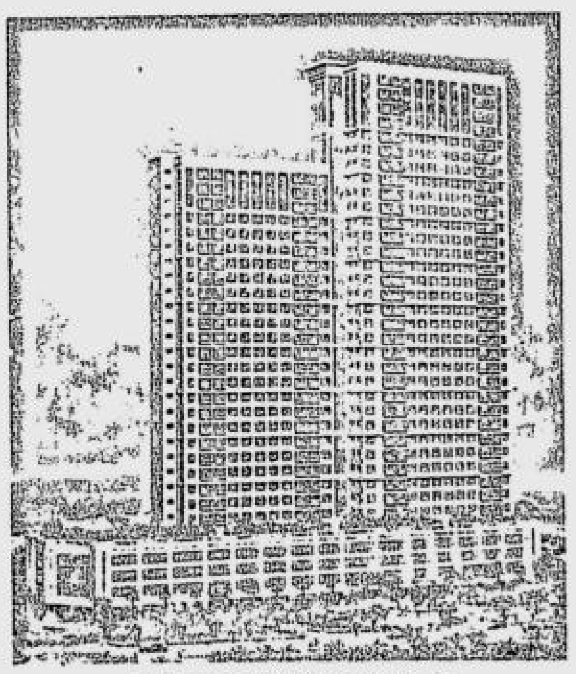

The three towers of the first phase, Manhattan Parkway


A transfer pavilion links the walkway to various retail outlets and parking facilities


Elevated walkway

Forbes Town Center

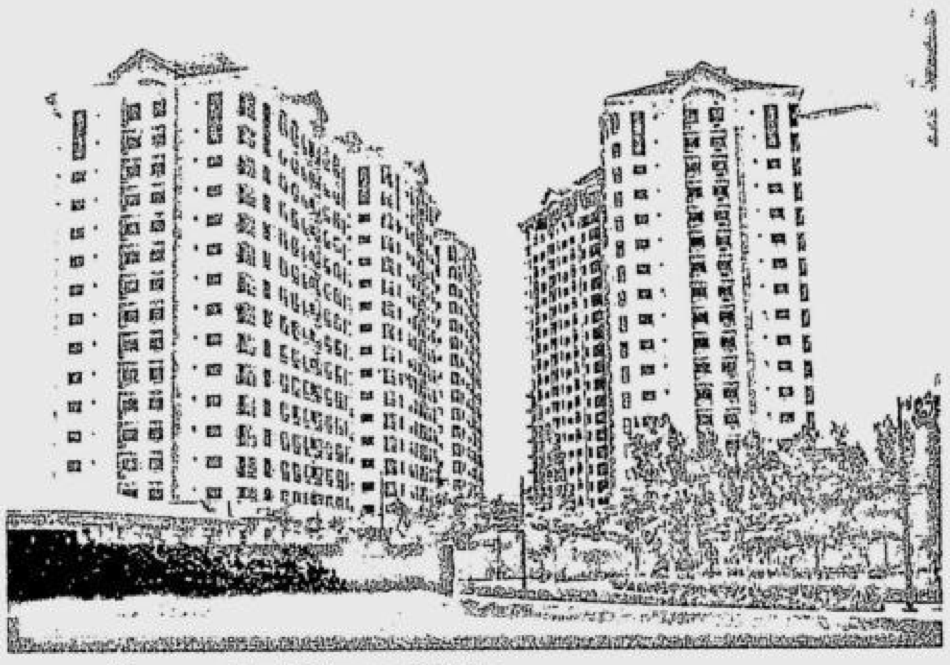
Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City

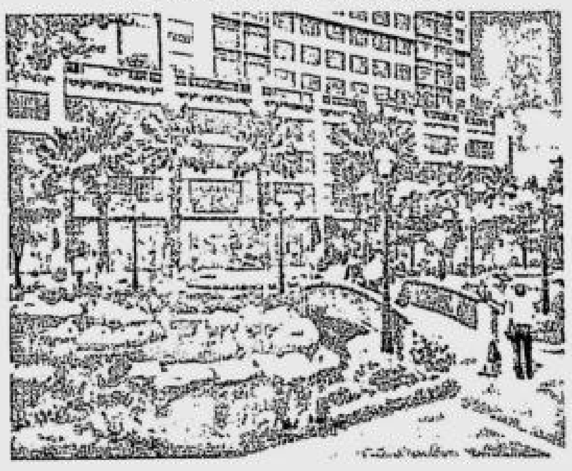

Forbeswood Parklane overlooks the Forbes Town Park and Lagoon

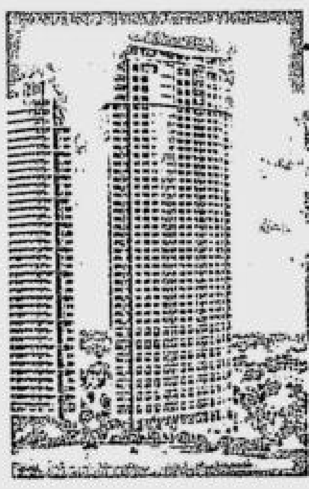
The Global City, hailed as the country's newest business district, is home to Megaworld's five-hectare Forbes Town Center. Bordering the Manila Golf and Country Club, it is the only project in the area that offers the longest stretch—almost half a kilometer—of spectacular golf course views.

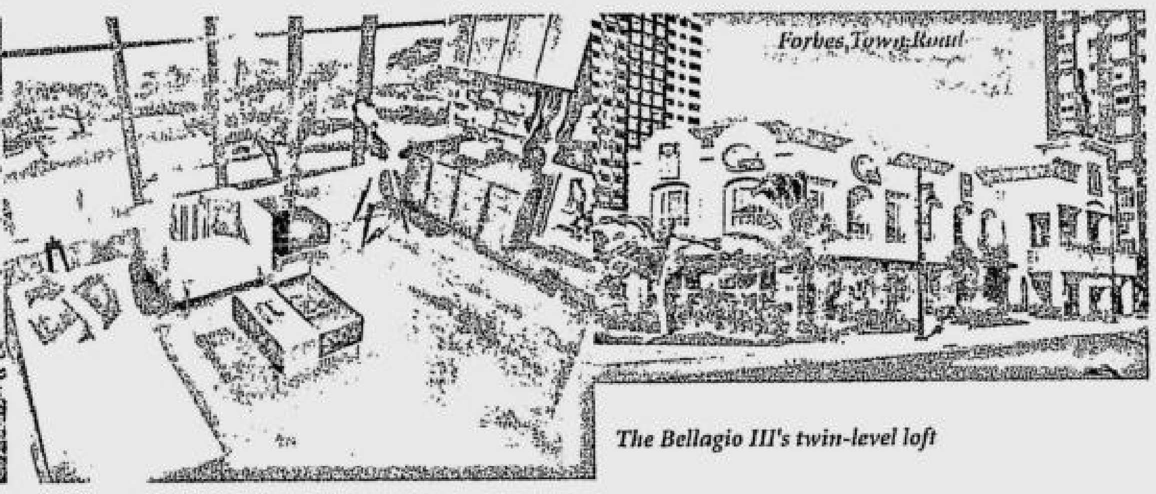
Two residential sections make up Forbes Town Center. The first comprises the three **Bellagio** towers that provide front-row views of the Manila Golf course. The second hosts the seven buildings of the Forbeswood residences, all embraced by lush greenery. The six towers of **Forbeswood Heights** overlook a 5,500-square-meter central park that overflows with play amenities, while the new **Forbeswood Parklane** is just across from the Forbes Town Park and Lagoon.

Another attraction at Forbes Town Center is a high-end retail strip called **Forbes Town Road.** Inspired by Singapore's Bugis Junction, it is expected to host more than a hundred casual and fine-dining restaurants and haute couture shops.


The now-sold-out Forbeswood Heights




Bellagio III



The Bellagio III's twin-level loft

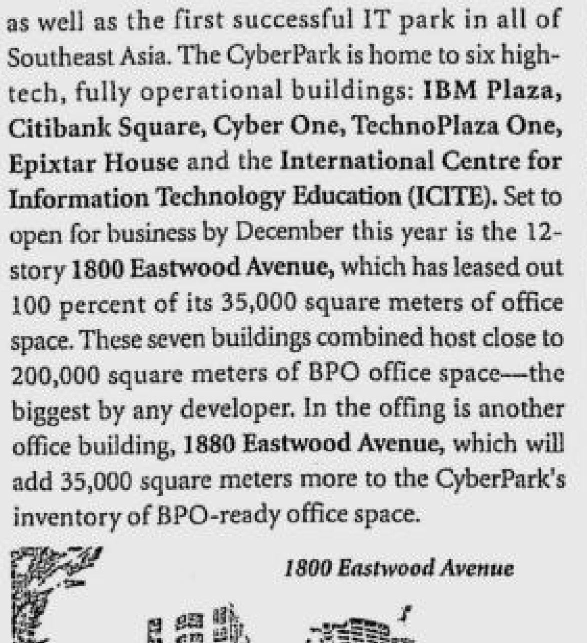
Showing the Way in BPO Office Development

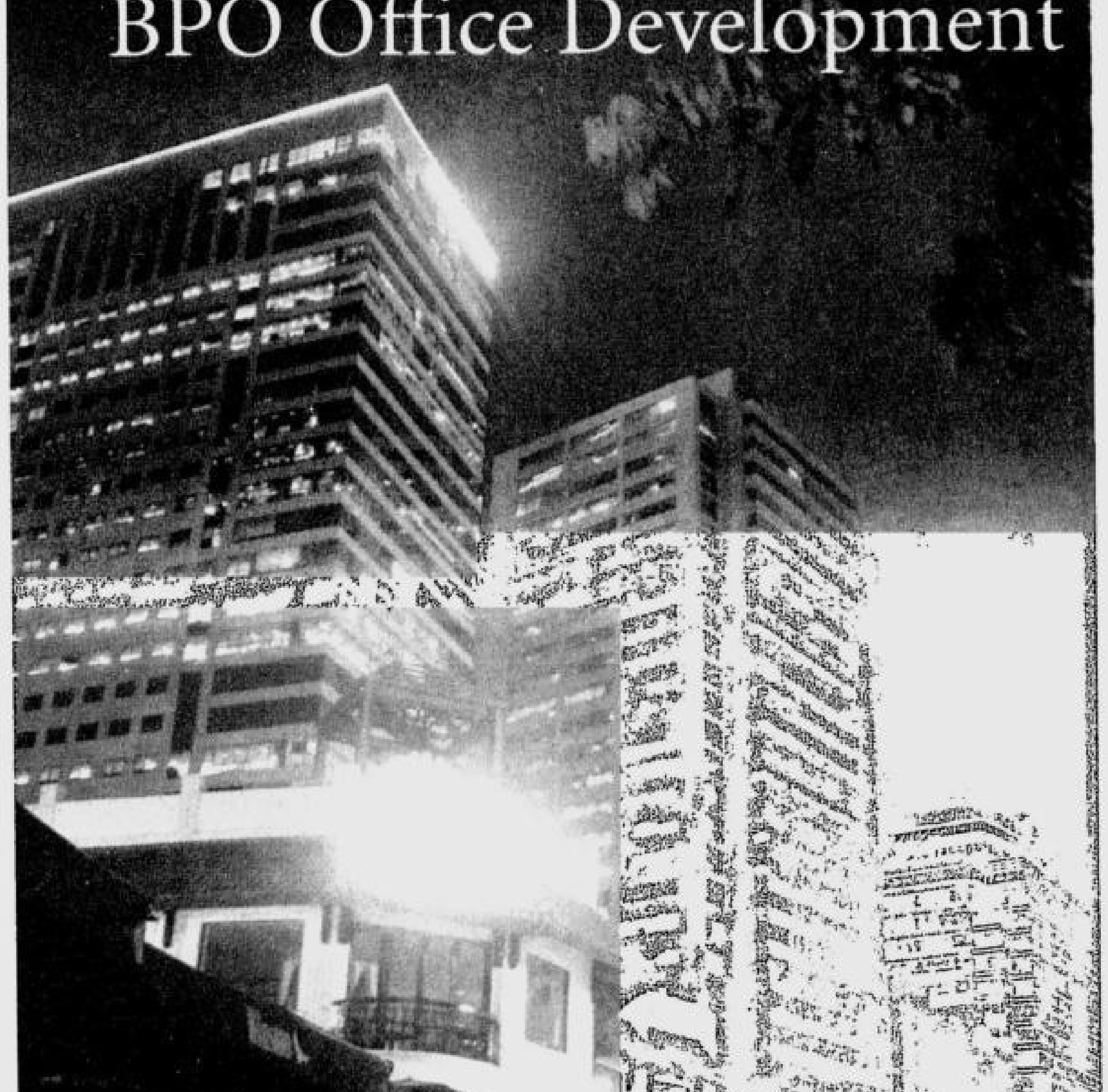
The rapidly expanding business process outsourcing (BPO) sector is playing a major role in creating a robust economic and investment environment in the Philippines. Megaworld is taking advantage of this growth by aggressively addressing the country's dwindling supply of top-grade, BPO-ready office space.

Today, Megaworld is the country's No.1 BPO office landlord. Since 1996, it has built more than 350,000 square meters of office space. It is set to build at least 500,000 square meters more, designed primarily for a BPO clientele, in Metro Manila's most strategic locations in the next five years.

Eastwood City CyberPark

Megaworld's Eastwood City CyberPark is the first information technology (IT) park in the country as well as the first successful IT park in all of Southeast Asia. The CyberPark is home to six high-tech, fully operational buildings: **IBM Plaza, Citibank Square, Cyber One, TechnoPlaza One, Epixtar House** and the **International Centre for Information Technology Education (ICITE).** Set to open for business by December this year is the 12-story **1800 Eastwood Avenue,** which has leased out 100 percent of its 35,000 square meters of office space. These seven buildings combined host close to 200,000 square meters of BPO office space—the biggest by any developer. In the offing is another office building, **1880 Eastwood Avenue,** which will add 35,000 square meters more to the CyberPark's inventory of BPO-ready office space.


1800 Eastwood Avenue


The Eastwood City CyberPark provides high-tech office space for BPO and IT firms

The CyberPark's knowledge workers

The CyberPark is home to over 60 firms—half of which belong to the BPO sector—and a 15,000-strong BPO and IT workforce, making it the workplace of choice among companies specializing in BPO and IT businesses. Among its high-profile tenants are:

- Global information technology giant IBM
- Citibank's Asia Pacific Systems and Technology Solutions Development Center
- Largest Asia-based call center eTelecare
- Anti-virus software developer Trend Micro
- Animation company TOEI Animation Phils.
- Custom power supplies provider EMERSON and its subsidiary Astec Power
- Canon's research and development arm Canon Information Technology Philippines
- Linksys technical support center Link2Support
- Electrical engineering and electronics company Siemens
- SITEL Corporation, one of the world's top five call centers in terms of revenue
- TransWorks BPO Philippines, a leading outsourcing firm offering contact center and BPO services to Global 1000 companies

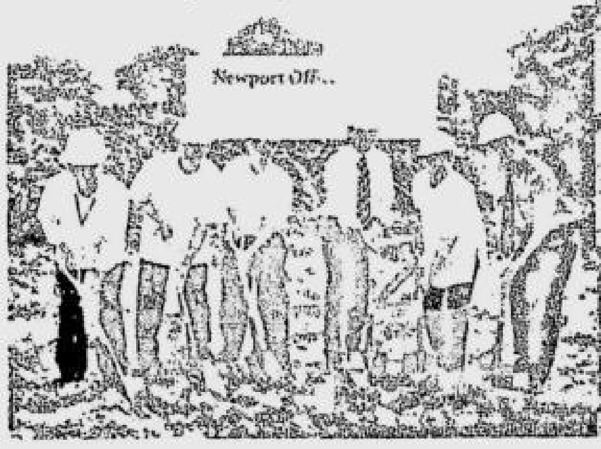
Equipped with Wi-Fi infrastructure, Eastwood City stands out as a "hot spot city." It offers Eastwood City tenants and visitors free round-the-clock access to wireless broadband Internet.

MEGAWORLD CORPORATION

Newport City CyberPark

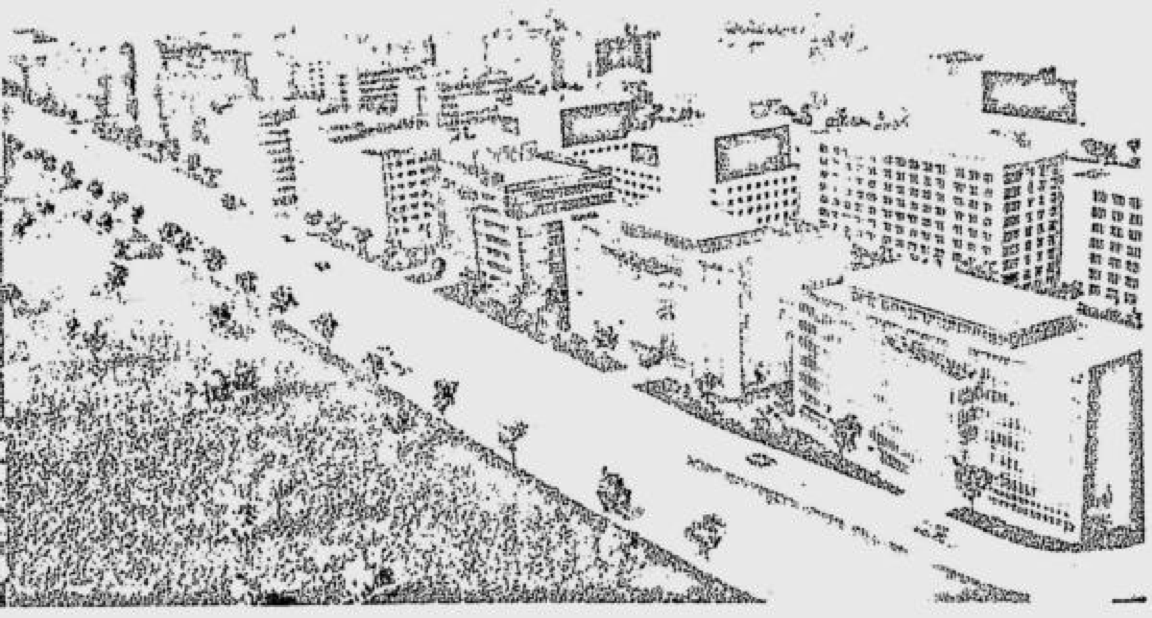
With its reputation as an upcoming hotel-and-golf resort and its proximity to the local and international airports, Newport City's business section boasts both a relaxing atmosphere and an environment conducive for business.

Megaworld has broken ground for **Newport Corporate Plaza One,** the first office building at Newport City. The eight-story, 20,000-square-meter project is equipped with high-tech infrastructure to meet the requirements of today's most formidable BPO companies. The project is slated for completion by the first quarter of 2008.


Newport Off...

Groundbreaking rites for Newport Corporate Plaza One

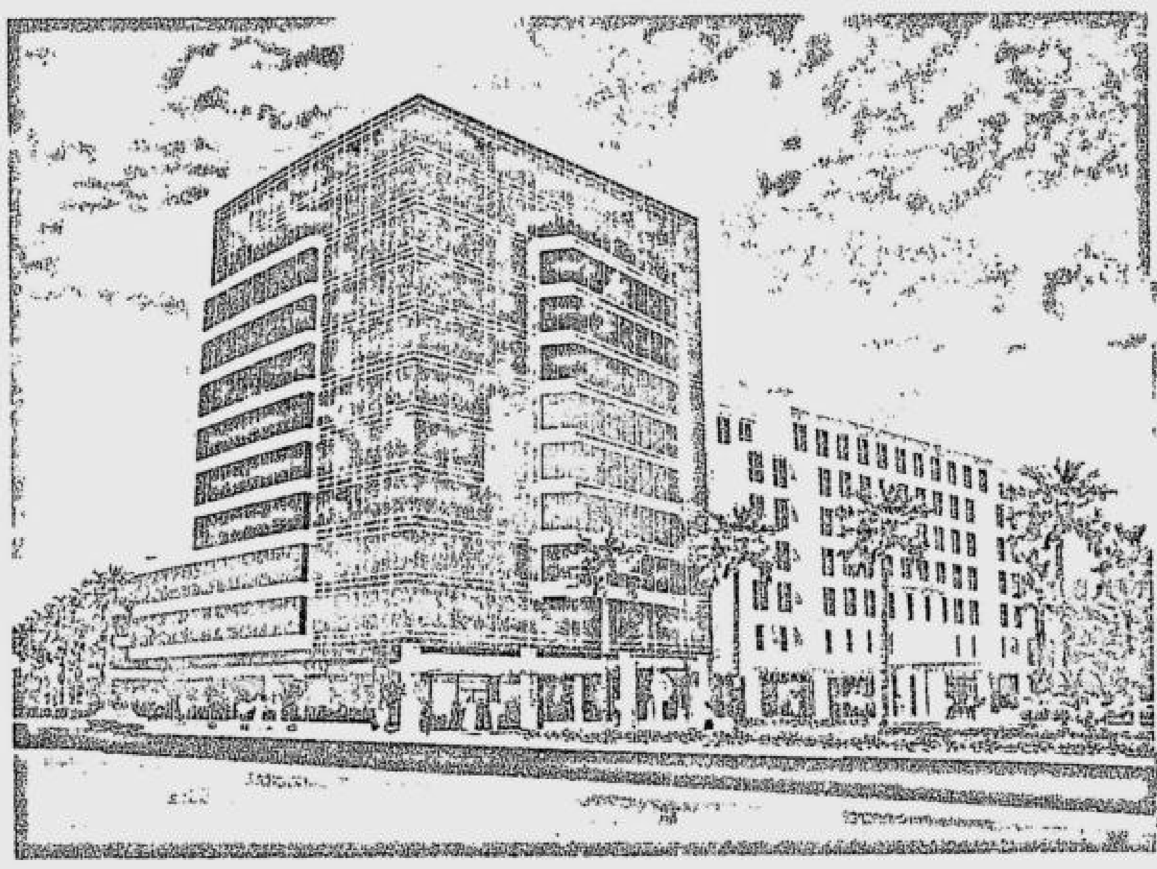
The proposed office block at Newport City



McKinley Hill CyberPark

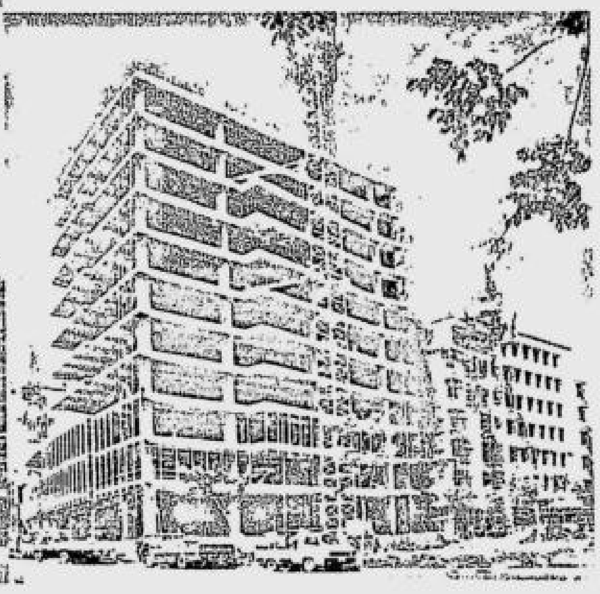
McKinley Hill's 15-hectare corporate block, the McKinley Hill CyberPark, will host initially at least over 200,000 square meters of office space over the next five years. As an economic zone approved by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, it offers a package of strategic incentives to local and foreign companies specializing in IT and BPO services.

Already in progress is the construction of **One World Square,** the first office tower to rise in the community. The 11-story, 40,000-square-meter building has recently been topped off and is slated for completion by the first half of 2007. Construction of two more office towers, **Two World Square** and **Three World Square**—with a leasable floor area of about 25,000 square meters each—is in the offing.



Architect's rendering of a new high-tech office building, One World Square...

...and the actual construction site



A Strong Share in the Overseas Filipino Market

Overseas Filipinos and their families are driving a demand for mid-income housing

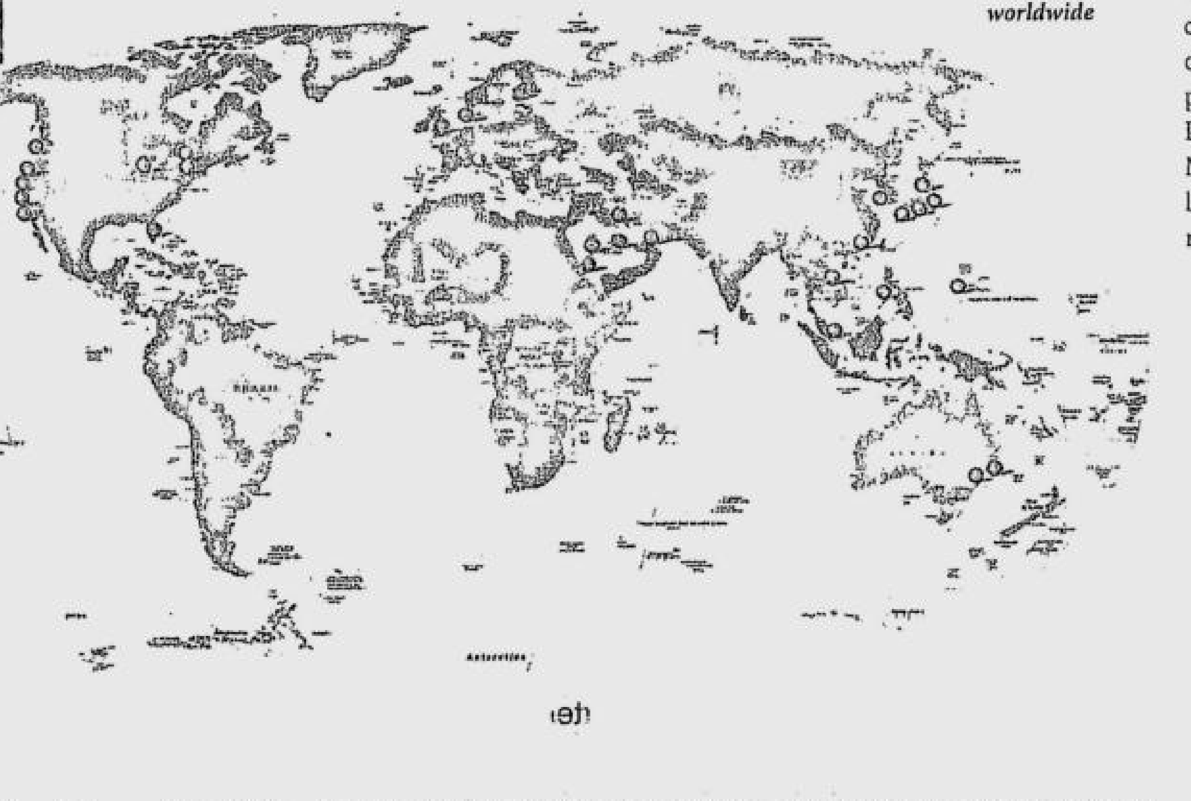
Local and foreign visitors assess investment opportunities in Megaworld projects

The surge of remittances from overseas Filipinos is helping fuel the growth of the property sector in the Philippines. Dollar inflows are projected to hit an all-time high of US$12 billion by end-2006. Of this figure, about US$3 billion will be invested in real estate. And since investing in mid-income housing has now become a priority among overseas Filipinos, Megaworld, as a leader in this segment, is well positioned to provide them with quality products and services.

Through Megaworld International, Megaworld's overseas marketing arm, the developer is building a strong brand in the international community. Its global reach is currently unmatched, with more than 30 sales offices spanning the Asia Pacific, Europe, the Middle East and the USA, manned by almost 600 overseas-based independent agents. With more offices to open in Canada, Europe and the USA, Megaworld International expects the number to double in the next five years.

Setting Megaworld International apart is its dedication to provide excellent service to its customers. Through its highly diversified portfolio of real estate products, affordable payment and pricing schemes and after-sales services, Megaworld International brings the benefits of investing in the Megaworld brand as well as its trendsetting urban lifestyles to overseas Filipinos and other overseas real estate clients.

Overseas real estate clients at a Megaworld International exhibit



Megaworld sales offices worldwide

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